

TENNYSON
Lancelot and Elaine

WITH
Introduction, Marginal gloss to
Text, Notes, Paraphrase and
Explanations etc.

BY
Prof. J. C. BISWAS, M. A.

AGRA
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LANCELOT AND ELAINE

BY

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Edited with Introduction, Notes, Paraphrase and
a Useful Appendix etc.

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LORD TENNYSON

(1809—1892)

INTRODUCTION.

His Life.

Alfred Tennyson was born on August 6, 1809, at Somersby, a tiny village in Lincolnshire, where his father, the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, was rector. The country immediately about Somersby was remarkable for its rich valleys and beautiful woodlands; and Tennyson's works bear witness to the indelible impress of these early surroundings upon his mind. When he was seven years old, he was sent to the Louth Grammar School, and returning home after a few years, was educated with his elder brother Charles by his father. The two brothers while yet youths, jointly published in 1827, a small volume of poems called *Poems by Two Brothers*. In 1828, Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge, and there he made acquaintance with a number of men, who distinguished themselves highly in later life. During his course at Cambridge, Tennyson won the Chancellor's prize with the poem of Timbuctoo. In 1830, he made his real entrance into the world of English letters by the publication of a slim volume, *Poems chiefly Lyrical*. It is largely the work of an experimentalist in metre and melody. The poems in this volume are the preliminary studies of an artist with a fresh exquisite feeling for beauty and form, who is bent on mastering the technique of his craft.

Tennyson lost his father in 1830, and in that year he left Cambridge without taking a degree. After about ten years of silence, he published two volumes,

of poems, which were marked by a broadening and deepening power, and which at once established his fame as a poet. Wordsworth pronounced him decidedly the greatest of the living English poets, and from this time, he took that leading place in the literature of his day, which his astonishing vitality and productiveness maintained, till his death. The two volumes of Poems of 1842, mark the end of Tennyson's first period of authorship.

From 1842, until his death, Tennyson lived a life of seclusion and steady industry. In 1847, he published *The Princess*, which indicates his method and the nature of his ambition. The year 1850 is conspicuous in his life as the year of his marriage with Miss Emily Sellwood, of the publication of *In Memoriam*, and of his appointment to the Laureateship. Though *In Memoriam* has its roots in the early life of Tennyson, and was, in part at least, written when the grief it commemorates was fresh, it is connected by its subject matter rather with Tennyson's later work, and with the interests of the second half of the century. Three years later, he settled in the Isle of Wight, which was his home. Now he bent all his powers to win success in the two great fields of poetry, which in his earlier years he had left unattempted, the Epic and the Drama. Four of the *Idylls of the King* appeared in 1850, and others were gradually added until the work grew to the symmetry of its full proportions. In 1870, he published *Queen Mary*, the first of his series of dramas. The purely spiritual side of his genius was developing now, the rapturous delight in the tangible revelation of beauty, the luxury of the eye and the ear, yielding to a deeper perception of an underlying world of spirit, of which this material world seemed but the shadow.

In 1884, Tennyson was created a baron ; he sat in the House of Lords, and for a time took serious interest in the political question, but shortly fell out with Gladstone over the Irish question. He died in 1892 at Aldworth in Surrey, and was buried in the Westminster Abbey.

Tennyson's Poetry.

Of all modern English poets, Tennyson has perhaps the largest number of readers. His poetry is built on the foundations of Law, Nobility and Simplicity.

(i) The entire body of his writings is pervaded by a sense of Law controlling the worlds of sense and spirit ; everywhere he recognises a settled scheme of great purposes underlying a universal order and gradually developing to completion. Both in his treatment of nature and human action, we find the same guiding and controlling principle of law. In *In Memoriam* he writes,

"I curse not nature, no, nor death ;
For nothing is that errs from law."

In all the workings of nature, he traces the evolution of the great designs of God,

"That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."

Allied to this belief in divine law, was his sympathy with disciplined order in the various spheres of human action. His ideal of freedom, for instance, is that freedom which has been evolved by the gradual growth of English institutions, that freedom which "slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent."

Again in his conception of love, in his portraiture of womanhood, we find the same spirit of law and

discipline. His highest ideal of love is the pure passion of wedded life; true love can exist only under the sanction of Duty.

(ii) The second dominant quality that pervades his verse is his '*nobility of thought*'. All his poetic writings are informed by the very spirit of Duty, Honour, and Reverence for all that is good, true and pure.

(iii) Another characteristic quality of Tennyson is his simplicity. The thoughts that he expresses, the emotions that he appeals to, are simple and common to all. There is nothing like Byron's wild excess of passion, or Browning's subtle analysis of character in his works. Tennyson appeals to the common code of duty and morality on which human society is based; we find a certain Puritan simplicity and restraint in the entire mass of his works.

Tennyson as Poetic Artist.

The popularity of Tennyson is traceable to a great extent to his delicate power as an artist. His thought, clothed in beauty, his emotion expressed in appropriate words, and the charming melody of his verse show him to have been one of the most delicate and at the same time, most conscious artists in English verse. Among other things, we find in his poetry, (i) a minute observation of nature, which places at his command a vast store of poetic description and imagery, (ii) a scholarly appreciation of all that is beautiful in the literature of the past, (iii) an exquisite precision in the use of words and phrases, (iv) an avoidance of the common place, and (v) lastly the exquisite melody of his diction.

(i) Tennyson is almost unrivalled in English verse for his *minute observation of nature and vivid painting of natural scenery*. He has sometimes been spoken

of as the disciple of Wordsworth ; but in fact, while he resembles the older poet in minuteness and accuracy of observation ; in other respects his attitude is fundamentally different. To Wordsworth, an Infinite Power was perpetually revealing itself through Nature ; he believed that Nature possessed a conscious life. Tennyson, on the other hand, is impressed with the *order* underlying the processes of Nature, with the "*law*" which cannot be broken. In a word, Wordsworth's view of Nature is essentially *spiritual*, and Tennyson's *scientific*.

(ii) Tennyson's thorough acquaintance with and appreciation of Greek, Latin, Italian and English poetry, have given to his verse an exquisite grace and delicacy, for which we look in vain elsewhere. Constantly, there come echoes and reminiscences of older poetry to the mind of a scholarly reader of Tennyson ; his poetry is liked by all, but a scholar finds an additional pleasure in reading him.

(iii) Tennyson possessed a *rare power of finding single words*, to give, at a flash as it were, *an exact picture* ; frequently, as we go through his poetry, we are startled by such expressions. This power of fitting the word to the thought may be seen in the following instances—'lily maid', the wild water lapping in the crag."

(iv) Another characteristic noticeable in Tennyson's poetry is his deliberate avoidance of the common place, words and expressions. From the rich storehouse of his mind, he culls the most musical and expressive words ; and thus his poetry, always saved from lapsing into prose, is sometimes a little artificial.

(v) Tennyson is undoubtedly one of the greatest masters of music in English verse. Everything that he has written is instinct with harmony and sweetness.

It was by patient and laborious culture that he acquired the secrets of sonorous rhythm and melodious diction. By skilful manipulation of vowel sounds, assonances, alliterations and alternations of long with short words, Tennyson secured his marvellous effects in verse music. The melody of his diction is almost unsurpassed ; the mere sound of his words and phrases lingers in the brain without any reference to their meaning. This is mainly due to his selection of melodious vowels and consonants, and also to his skilful use of alliteration. [Mark the effect of the alliteration here: "The moan of doves in immemorial elms, and murmuring of innumerable bees].

—Adapted from Webb.

The Idylls of the King.

The *Idylls of the King* contain a series of connected poems, of which the first fragment, *Morte d'Arthur* subsequently incorporated in 'The Passing of Arthur,' was published in 1842. In 1859, appeared *Enid*. *Vivien*, *Elaine* and *Guinevere*. In 1869 were added *The Coming of Arthur*, *The Holy Grail*, *Pellesse* and *Ettarre* and *The Passing of Arthur*. *The Last Tournament* appeared in 1871. *Garett* and *Lyneth* in 1872, *Balin* and *Balan* in 1885; and finally *Enid* was divided into two parts, *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid*.

These poems form parts in a general presentation of the story of Arthur, of his noble design of the Round Table, and of its failure under the ever widening influence of evil, in the shape of the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere. It is a story of bright hope (in *The Coming of Arthur* and *Gareth and Lyneth*) followed by growing disillusionment, of which the protagonists are the melancholy characters of Arthur and Guinevere, Lancelot and Elaine.

The Story of King Arthur.

In the Middle Ages, two great cycles of Romance gathered round the figures of two great kings—Charlemagne of France and Arthur of England. Charlemagne is an historical personage ; and his conquests and achievements are matters of authentic history ; but Arthur is a legendary figure, about whose life and exploits there is no certainty. Modern research has however revealed some historical basis with regard to this romantic figure. There is reason to think that Arthur was a chieftain or general in the 6th century, and led the tribes of Cumbria against the Saxons and Picts. Five and six centuries later we find King Arthur taking definite form as a romantic hero in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britannum*, a work in which the author's imagination played a very large part.

According to Geoffrey's narrative, Arthur is the son of Uther Pendragon. The elves bestow on him long life, riches and virtue. At the age of 15, he becomes king of Britain and wars against Scots, Pict and Saxons. With his sword 'Caliburn' (Excalibur) he slays Childric, defeats the heathen and conquers Scotland, Ireland, Iceland and the Orkneys. He marries Guanhamara (Guinevere), a lady of noble Roman family. He conquers many lands on the continent. His court is at Caerleon on Usk. He is summoned to pay tribute to the Emperor of Rome, resists and declares war. The kingdom is left in his nephew Modred's charge. On his way to Rome, he slays the giant of St. Michael's Mount. Arthur is about to enter Rome when he receives warning that Modred has seized Guanhamara and the kingdom. He returns and Modred retreats to Cornwall. In the battle on the Camel, Modred is slain with all his

knights. Arthur is mortally wounded and is borne to the island of Avalon for the healing of his wound. Guanhamara takes the veil.

This story was developed subsequently by many English and French writers. In the 15th century, Malory took the story summarised above, as the foundation of his *Morte d' Arthur*. His work is a skilful selection and blending of materials taken from the mass of Arthurian legends. The central story of *Morte d' Arthur* consists of two main elements ; the reign of King Arthur ending in catastrophe and the dissolution of the Round Table ; and the quest the Holy Grail in which Launcelot fails by reason of his sin, and Galahad succeeds.

Tennyson's treatment of the story of Arthur.

The Arthinian Romance took hold of Tennyson's imagination very early in his life. It is said that when he was quite a boy, he read Malory's *Morde d' Arthur*, and often with his brothers, held mimic tournaments after the fashion of the knights of the Round Table. He composed many poems bearing upon the story of Arthur at different periods of his poetic career ; but till late in his life, he had no idea of bringing them all under one central design. The twelve books of the *Idylls of the King*, as they are, form one great poem characterised by unity of design and grandeur of tone : they present a full cycle of heroic story and have a rightful claim to be called the 'Epic of Arthur.'

The Spiritual Significance of the Idylls. The title *Idylls of the King* seems to indicate that the first design was of a series of picturesque narrative poems, each one complete in itself. They were in fact regarded as "rich pictorial fancies taken certainly not at random but without any really coherent design, out of a great magazine of romantic

story." Subsequently, the poet made the allegorical meaning of the poems clear, but a lover of poetry would appreciate the poems not for their spiritual significance but for their poetry and romance. The poem, Tennyson tells us, is "an allegory of the soul of man fighting with sense, and passing on its way through life to death and through death to resurrection." (Stopford A. Brooke). The Idylls reflect the eternal struggle between the good and the evil in human life, between the spiritual and sensual elements in human nature. "Arthur represents the spiritual force that works to make the dead world live, which for a time has power to accomplish its purpose, but is gradually over-borne and goes down. The strife is one which is ever to be renewed; Arthur is deeply wounded, but he can not die; he passes to the mystic island valley to heal him of his wound, and he will one day come again and finish the work which he has begun. The hero has been victorious over the external foe, he has conquered rebels and heathen invaders: his failure is due to a more subtle enemy, to the taint of *moral corruption* which creeps in among the circle which he has gathered round him."

But it would be a mistake to take the poem merely as an allegory. Arthur and his knights and the ladies of the court are not personifications of abstract qualities. They are real men and women, and though they do embody certain qualities, they are by no means personified abstractions. There are some purely allegorical figures in the poem—such as the Lady of the Lake personifying Religion.

The story is certainly more fascinating than the allegory which was an after thought. The romance of the story caught hold of the imagination of Tennyson, and in his treatment of it, he made many

fresh and delightful inventions—not allegorical but romantic. He took great pleasure in opening out and developing the ancient characters, in clothing them with new dresses of thought, and in fitting new emotions to the old events in which they play their parts. He has re-created some characters altogether; and even the leading personages are frequently quite independent of the allegory.

King Arthur in The Idylls of the King.

"Arthur is a man in whom the higher instincts of his nature dominate the lower and whose life is governed by the law within." In the *Coming of Arthur*, Tennyson gives us a sketch of this hero; he is a combination of the real and the ideal. He is king and ruler of men—the bringer of law, peace and good government into his world, who redeems waste places and wasted lives and who knits together his knights into one compact body for purity of life and overthrowing of wrong. He is more than King; he is the ideal man. He loves, and loves with a pure heart. With him, love is no sensual passion; it is a holy emotion and is put into connection with his kingly work; no work without love and no continuance of love without work. "Were I joined with her", says Arthur,

"Then might we live together as one life,
And reigning with one will in everything,
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this world to make it live."

Besides, King Arthur has also spiritual side. He has dim dreams and visions, during which the outward world fades away. Strange and mystic power from the unseen world stand round about him. He moves in God and in eternity while yet on earth. His senses are so exalted that he sees

the morning star at noon day; he comes from the great deep and to great deep he goes; he is made king by immortal queens; he is not doomed to death but to return and live again.

The story of Arthur as told in the various Idylls, and its spiritual significance.

The first in the series of the Idylls is *The Coming of Arthur*. In this poem, the King is crowned and married to Guinevere; the land is subdued to peace and justice; the heathens and the Romans are driven out, and the Round Table established.

Next in the order comes *Gareth and Lynette*. It represents "the spring time of Arthur's glory, when the Round Table seemed to be indeed a model for the mighty world and the King himself the representative of Christ upon Earth." Gareth is the image of the Arthurian kingdom in its youthful energy, purity and gentleness; he is moreover the incarnation of the vigour, courage, gaiety and audacity of youth. The taint of moral poison in the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere has not yet crept in; this is the period,

"When every morning brought a noble chance
And every chance brought out a noble knight."

The Marriage of Geraint and Geraint and Enid which were originally printed as one Idyll, show us the first insidious approach of corruption; suspicions of his wife's chastity are bred in Geraint's mind by rumours of the queen's unfaithfulness. These suspicions of Geraint "prepare us for the world's loud whisper breaking into storm;" and Enid the pure and loyal wife serves as a contrast to Queen Guinevere.

In Balin and Balan, the rumours about the queen's unfaithfulness gain currency, and are responsible for the tragedy of the two brothers.

In *Merlin and Vivien*, the evil comes into clear light and spreads widely in the court. Vivien, the wily and malignant daughter of a man, killed fighting against Arthur, comes to Arthur's court to sow suspicion: and then by her physical charms, she brings the old and wise Merlin under her power. "The victory of sense over soul becomes more and more assured."

In *Lancelot and Elaine*, we see the beginning of the retribution for the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere. The death of Elaine, 'the lily maid of Astolat' is due to Lancelot's false truth to his guilty passion for the queen.

In *Holy Grail*, a new cause of the failure of Arthur's work and the Round Table is introduced. [There are two things which, according to Tennyson, break up the Round Table and destroy the work of Arthur: the first is the lust of the flesh and the second is the mystic-ascetic religion. *Merlin and Vivien* represents the first and *the Holy Grail* represents the second.] The knights, misled by mystic dreams, desert their duties and follow "wandering fires." Thus their true faith is lost in superstitions.

In *Pelleas and Ettarre*, we see the hope and faith of the young Pelleas shattered by the bitter experience of the prevailing corruption in the court.

In *The Last Tournament*, we see the complete triumph of the senses over the soul. After the tournament, in which the false-hearted Tristram has won the prize, Arthur returns to find his home empty and Guinevere fled.

In *Guinevere*, we see the full effects of the sin of the queen. The Round Table is shattered and Arthur's work totally destroyed.

The Passing of Arthur, represents the last battle and the end of Arthur's earthly life.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot ; 4
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam ;
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit, 10
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door, 15
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it, 20
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where : this cut is fresh ;
That ten years back ; this dealt him at Caerlyle ;
That at Caerleon ; this at Camelot :
And ah God's mercy, what a stroke was there !
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God 25
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,
And saved him : so she lived in fantasy.

Elaine, the
pure and
beautiful
maid of Asto-
lat, was care-
fully guard-
ing the shield
of Lancelot
in her cham-
ber.

Lancelot left
the shield
with her on
his way to
the diamond
tourney.

Arthur had
accidentally
come across
a crown
containing
nine diamonds,
while wander-
ing through a
solitary glen.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt 30
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him King,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse, 35
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together; but their names were lost; 40
And each had slain his brother at a blow:
And down they fell and made the glen abhor'd:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into colour with the crags:
And he, that once was king, had on a crown 45
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.
And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims 51
Fled like a glittering riyulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise shalt be
King.' 55

Arthur declar-
ed that there
would be an
annual tour-
neyment for
the diamond
nine years.
won

Thereafter, when a King, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his
knights.
Saying, 'These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—
For public use: henceforward let there be, 60

Once every year, a joust for one of these:
 For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow

eight dia-
monds in
eight suc-
cessive years.

In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land 65
 [Hereafter, which God hinder.] Thus he spoke:
 And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and
 still

Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
 With purpose to present them to the Queen,
 When all were won; but meaning all at once 70
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon
 Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
 Hard on the river nigh the place which now
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
 At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
 Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere,
 'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
 To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,' she said, 'ye
 know it.'

On the eve
of the ninth
tournament,
75 Lancelot pre-
tended to be
ill and ex-
pressed his
inability to
go to Camelot,
with a view
80 to remain
behind with
Queen Guine-
vere who was
sick.

'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd, 'the great deeds
 Of Launcelot, and his prowess in the lists,
 A sight ye love to look on.' And the Queen
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King. 85
 He thinking that he read her meaning there,
 'Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
 Than many diamonds,' yielded; and a heart
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen
 (However much he yearn'd to make complete 90
 The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)
 Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
 'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
 And lots me from the saddle;' and the King 94

Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way;
No sooner gone than suddenly, she began :

Guinevere reproached Lancelot, for his conduct would give rise to scandal. Lancelot, in his turn, reproached the queen with her coldness of feeling towards him.

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, "Lo the shameless ones, who take 10
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!"
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain :
'Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer, when ye loved me first. 11
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd 12
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty: and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King 13
Would listen smiling. How then? is the
more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? for would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?

Guinevere declares her passion for Lancelot, saying that Arthur is a pure passionless god, who does not care for earthly love.

She broke into a little scornful laugh : 14
'Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,

He cares not for me: only here to-day
 There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his oyes:
 Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him—else
 Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
 And swearing men to vows impossible, 13
 To make them like himself: but, friend, to me
 He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
 For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
 The low sun makes the colour: I am yours,
 Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond. 135
 And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
 The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
 When sweetest: and the vermin voices here
 May buzz so loud—we scorn them, but they sting.

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights: 140
 'And with what face, after my pretext made,
 Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
 Before a King who honours his own word,
 As if it were his God's?'

'Yea,' said the Queen,
 'A moral child without the craft to rule, 145
 Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
 If I must find you wit: we hear it said
 That men go down before your spear at a touch,
 But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
 This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown: 150
 Win! by this kiss you will: and our true King
 Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
 As all for glory; for to speak him true,
 Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
 No keener hunter after glory breathes, 155
 He loves it in his knights more than himself:
 They prove to him his work: win and return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
 Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,

She asks
 Lancelot to
 go to the
 tournament
 to avoid po-
 pular scan-
 dal.

She suggests
 that he
 might say to
 Arthur that
 he had pre-
 tended ill-
 ness only to
 fight incog-
 nito.

On his way
 to Camelot

Lancelot reaches Astolat where he is cordially received.

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare, 160
 Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
 And there among the solitary downs,
 Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
 Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track, 165
 That all in loops and links among the dales
 Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
 Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man, 170
 Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
 And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
 With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
 Moving to meet him in the castle court; 175
 And close behind them stept the lily maid
 Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
 There was not: some light jest among them rose
 With laughter dying down as the great knight
 Approach'd them: then the Lord of Astolat: 180
 'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what
 name .. Livest between the lips? for by thy state 181
 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
 After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
 Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
 Known as they are, to me they are unknown.'

He asks the
Lord of Asto-
lat for a
blank shield.

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
 'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
 What I by mere mischance have brought, my
 shield. But since I go to joust as one unknown 190
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not.
 Hereafter ye shall know me—and the shield—
 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
 Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat, 'Here is Torre's:
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre. 195
 And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
 His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir Torre,
 'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'
 Here laughed the father saying, 'Fie, Sir Churl,
 Is that an answer for a noble knight? 200
 Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
 He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
 Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
 To make her thrice as wilful as before.' 205

The shield
of Sir Torre
is forthwith
offered to
him.

'Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not
 Before this noble knight,' said young Lavaine,
 'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:'
 He seem'd so sullen; vext-he could not go:
 A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt 210
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,
 And that it was too slippery to be held,
 And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
 The castle-well, belike; and then I said
 That if I went and if I fought and won it 215
 (But all was jest and joke among ourselves)
 Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
 But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
 To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
 Win shall I not, but do my best to win: 220
 Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

Sir Lavaine
expresses his
desire to ac-
company
Lancelot if
the latter
permits him.

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,
 Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship
 O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
 Then were I glad of you as guide and friend: 225
 And you shall win this diamond,—as I hear
 It is a fair large diamond,—if ye may,
 And yield it to this maiden, if ye will.
 'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir Torre,

Lancelot is
glad to have
Sir Lavaine
as his guide,
and remarks
that the prize
of the tour-
nament, the
big diamond
may be fitly
presented to
fair Elaine,

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.' 230
Then she who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flushed slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd : 235
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like.' 240

at the first
sight falls in
love with
Lancelot.

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord, 245
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west, and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it: but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose 250
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Mari'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted her eyes. 255
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Lancelot
shows great
frankness and
to
pla

Then the great knight, the darling of the court, 260
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind: 264

Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
 And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
 And ever well and readily answer'd he:
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man, 270
 Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
 'He learnt and warn'd me of thier fierce design
 Against my house, and him they caught and
 maim'd;
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled 275
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
 The Pagan yet once more on badon hill.'

'O there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine said, rapt
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth 281
 Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.
 O tell us—for we live apart—you know
 Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot spoke
 And answer'd him at full, as having been 285
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
 And in the four loud battles by the shore
 Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts 290
 Of Celidon the forest; and again
 By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
 Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
 Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breath'd; 295
 And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
 When the strong neighings of the wild white
 Horse
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering;

He gives detailed accounts of Arthur's glorious wars, and sincerely admires Arthur's heroism and courage.

And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
 And down the waste sand-shores of Trath
 Treroit, 300
 Where many a heathen fell; 'and on the mount
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King
 Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
 And all his legions crying Christ and him,
 And break them; and I saw him, after, stand 305
 High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
 Red as the rising sun with heathed blood,
 And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
 "They are broken, they are broken!" for the King,
 However mild he seems at home, nor cares 310
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—
 For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs
 Saying, his knights are better men than he—
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
 Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives 315
 No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,

Elaine mistakes Lancelet's tenderness to her for his love, and keeps awake all night brooding over her new fancy.

Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
 'Save your great self, fair lord;' and when he fell
 From talk of war to traits of pleasantry—
 Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind— 320
 She still took note that when the living smile
 Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
 Of melancholy severe, from which again,
 Whenever in her hovering to and fro
 The lily maid had striven to make him cheer, 325
 There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
 Of manners and of nature: and she thought
 That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
 And all night long his face before her liv'd,
 As when a painter, poring on a face, 330
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
 Behind it, and so paints him that his face,

The shape and colour of a mind and life,
 Lives for his children, ever at its best
 And fullest; so the face before her lived, 335
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
 Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
 First as in fear, step after stop, she stole 340
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
 "This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
 Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
 There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and
 smooth'd 345

The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
 Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed
 Then if seven men had set upon him, saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy light. 350
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire, 355
 That he should wear her favour at the tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking for it. "
 'Fair lord, whose name I know not—noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest—will you wear
 My favour at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said he, 360
 'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
 Favour of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know.'
 'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord, 365
 That those who know should know you.' And
 he turned

She sees
 Lancelot be-
 fore he leaves
 and agrees
 to keep his
 shield. At
 her request,
 Lancelot also
 agrees to
 wear her
 favour in the
 tournament.

Her counsel up and down within his mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd, 'True my child.
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
 What is it?' and she told him 'A red sleeve 370
 Broider'd with pearls' and brought it: then he
 bound

Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so much
 For any maiden living,' and the blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight; 375
 But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
 His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
 Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:
 'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield 380
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day: 'I am your squire!'
 Wherat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your colour back; 385
 Once, twice, and thrice; now get you hence
 to bed: '

Lancelot leaves for Camelot with Sir Lavaine as his companion.

So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
 And thus they moved away: she stay'd a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there—
 Her bright hair blown about the serious face 390
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss—
 Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs. 394
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the
 shield.

There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

On their way meanwhile the new companions past away
 they halt for Far o'er the long backs of the business downs
 the night at 'he care. To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight

Not far from Camelot, now for forty years 400
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,
 And ever labouring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a hall
 dwelling of
 a hermit
 w h o h a d
 been a knight
 in his time.
 On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,
 And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry; 405
 The green light from the meadows underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
 And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
 And thither wending there that night they bode. 410

But when the next day broke from underground,
 And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
 They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away:
 Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but hold my name
 Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,' 415
 Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
 Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
 But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it indeed?'
 Lavaine is
 struck dumb
 with admis-
 ration and
 reverence.
 when Lan-
 celot reveals
 his identity
 to him.
 And after muttering 'The great Lancelot,'
 At last he got his breath and answer'd, 'One, 420
 One have I seen—that other, our liege lord,
 The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings, *di*
 Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
 He will be there—then were I stricken blind
 That minute, I might say that I had seen.' 425

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
 By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
 Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat 430
 Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
 Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
 And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
 And from the carven-work behind him crept

When they
 reach Came-
 lot, Lavaine
 surveys the
 whole scene
 with asto-
 nish men t
 and then
 fixes his ad-
 miring gaze
 on King
 Arthur.

Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make 435
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
 The new design wherein they lost themselves,
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the work: 440
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
 Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Lancelot tells him that Arthur alone is truly a great man. When the combat begins Lancelot joins the weaker side and overthrows all. Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said, 'Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat, The truer lance: but there is many a youth 445 Now crescent, who will come to all I am And overcome it; and in me there dwells No greatness, save it be some far-off touch Of greatness to know well I am not great: There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped upon him As on a thing miraculous, and anon 451 The trumpets blew; and then did either side, They that assail'd, and they that held the lists, Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move, Meet in the midst, and there so furiously 455 Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive, If any man that day were left afield, The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw Which were the weaker: then he hurl'd into it 460 Against the stronger: little need to speak Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl, Count, baron—whom he smote, he overthrew.

The relations of Lancelot, to preserve the glory of their house bear down upon Lancelot with a great rush

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin, Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists, 465 Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight Should do and almost overdo the deeds Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, 'Lo! What is he? I do not mean the force alone—'

The grace and versatility of the man! 470 and inflict
 Is it not Lancelot? ' When has Lancelot worn a severe
 Favour of any lady in the lists? wound upon
 him.
 Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know.'
 'How then? who then?' a fury seized them all,
 A fiery family passion for the name 475.
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds,
 and thus,
 Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
 In moving, all together down upon him
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea, 480
 Green-glimmering toward the summit; bears
 with all
 Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
 Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
 And him that helms it, so they overbore
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear 485
 Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt, and remained.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully;
 He bore a knight of old repute to the earth, 490 LanceLOT
 And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay. fights desper-
 He up the side, sweating with agony, got, ate ly and
 But thought to do while he might yet endure, wins. He is
 And being lustily holpen by the rest, declared as
 His party,—tho' it seem'd half-miracle 495 the cham-
 To those he fought with,—drave his kith and kin, pion but he
 And all the Table Round that held the lists, leaves the
 Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew place with-
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve out taking
 Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the knights, 500 his prize.
 His party, cried 'Advance and take the prize
 The diamond;' but he answer'd, 'Diamond me

No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
 Hence will I, and I charge you follow me not.' 505

Sorely wounded Lancelot goes to the cave-dwelling of the hermit, and is carefully nursed by the hermit and Sir Lavaine.

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
 With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
 There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the lance-head:'
 'Ah my sweet Lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine, 510
 'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'
 But he, 'I die already with it: draw—
 Draw,'—and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan, 514
 And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
 Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
 There stanch'd his wound: and there, in daily doubt
 Whether to live or die, far many a week
 Hid from the wide world's rumour by the grove 520
 Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

King Arthur commands Sir Gawain to find out the stranger Knight and give him his prize.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
 His party, knights of utmost North and West,
 Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles, 525
 Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
 'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
 Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'

'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such an
 one, 530

So great a knight as we have seen to-day—
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot—
 Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot—
 He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore, rise,
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight. 535
 Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.

I charge that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one
of you

Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given :
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him 540
No customary honour : since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares, 545
And cease not from your quest until ye find.'

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took,
And gave, the diamond: then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose, 550
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince
In the midnight and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal 555
Sir Mordred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wrath that the King's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went ; 561
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Past, thinking 'Is it Lancelot who hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound, 565
And ridd'n away to die ?' So fear'd the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay, lord,' she said.
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the Queen amazed,

Sir Gawaine
leaves the
court with
reluctance in
search of
Lancelot.

The Queen
tells Arthur
that the
stranger
Knight is
himself who
had told a
lie for the
sake of greater glory.

'Was he not with you? won he not your
prize?' 571

'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why that like was he.'
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said, 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk 575
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound, 580
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;
And added, "Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory."

Then replied the King: 585

The King is displeased because Lancelot has not confided in him. He informs the queen that Lancelot is perhaps in love with a maiden for he was wearing her favour in the tournament.

'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed, 590
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin— 594
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this!—
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field:
Yet good news too: for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm 600
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,

'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying that, she
chocked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung herself 605
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed
upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shriek'd out 'Traitor' to the unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale. 610

Guinevere is exceedingly angry to hear of Lancelot's treachery.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid 615
Glanced at, and cried, 'What news from Camelot,
Lord ?'

What of the knight with the red sleeve ?'
'He won.'

I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go; 620
Thereon she smote her hand: wellnigh she swoon'd:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find 625
The victor, but had ridd'n a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat, 'Bide with us,
And ride no more at random, noble Prince !
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield; 630
This will he send or come for: furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear.' To this the courteous Prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,

In course of his wandering in search of the stranger knight, Sir Gawain reaches Astolat and finds that Lancelot himself is the stranger knight.

Sir Gawain is
attracted by
the beauty
and freshness
of Elaine and
tries to cap-
ture her
heart.

Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it, 635
And stay'd : and cast his eyes on fair Elaine :
Where could be found face daintier ? then her
shape

From forehead down to foot, perfect—again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :
'Well—if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!' 640
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence 645
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, 'Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight 650
your King,

And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went
To all the winds?' 'Nay, by miné head,' said he,
'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven, 655
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes ;
But an ye will' it let me see the shield.'
And when thi shield was brought, and Gawain
saw

Sir Lancelot's azur lions, crown'd with gold, 659
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd :
'Right was the King ! our Lancelot ! that true
man !

'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily, 'I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight
of all.'
'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you love 664

This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!
 Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?
 Full simple was her answer, 'What know I?
 My brethren have been all my fellowship;
 And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for they
 talk'd,

670

Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself—
 I know not if I know what true love is,
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,
 I know there is none other I can love.' 674
 'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love him well,
 But would not, knew ye what all others know,
 And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried Elaine,
 And lifted her fair face and moved away:
 But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!

One golden minute's grace! he wore your
 sleeve:

680

Would he break faith with one I may not name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at last?

Nay—like enow: why then, far be it from me

To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!

And, damsel, for I deem you know full well. 685

Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave

My quest with you; the diamond also: here!

For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;

And if he love, it will be sweet to have it

From your own hand; and whether he love or not,

A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well 691

A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two

May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,

So ye will learn the courtesies of the court, 695

We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,

And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
 The diamond, and all wearied of the quest

But when
 he finds that
 Elaine loves
 and is per-
 haps loved by
 Lancelot, he
 departs from
 Astolat, leav-
 ing the dia-
 mond with
 Elaine.

Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away. 700

When Sir
Gawain re-
turns to the
court, King
Arthur is
highly offend-
ed with him,
because he
has neglected
his duty.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, 'Sir Lancelot is the knight.'
And added, 'Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region - but I lighted on the maid 705
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him: and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it:
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
'Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more 711
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a
word, 715

Linger'd that other, staring after him:
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were
loosed:

'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot, 720
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'

Some read the King's face, some the Queen's,
and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame 724
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd
so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquility.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared: 730

Sir Gawain
now spread
the news of
Lancelot's
love in the
court. The
queen boils
with anger,
but can do
nothing.

Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
 Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
 And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
 Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
 With lips severely placid, felt the knot 735
 Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
 Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
 Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
 As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat, 740 Elaine begs
 Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
 The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
 Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
 Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said,
 'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault 745
 Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?'
 'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherfore let me hence,'
 She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'
 'Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine: 750
 Bide,' answer'd he: 'we needs must hear anon
 Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,
 'And of that other, for I needs must hence
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he be, 754
 And with mine own hand give his diamond to
 him,

Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
 As you proud Prince who left the quest to me.
 Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself.

Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid. 760
 The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
 My father, to be sweet and serviceable
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye know
 When these have worn their tokens: let me hence
 I pray you.' Then her father nodding said. 765
 'Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child.

her father's
 permission to
 go to Lance-
 lot and nurse
 him in his
 sickness. Her
 father under-
 stands that
 she is in love
 with Lancelot
 and allows
 her to go.

Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
 Being our greatest : yea, and you must give it—
 And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
 For any mouth to gape for save a queen's— 770
 Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get you gone,
 Being so very wilful you must go.'

Elaine, accompanied by
 Sir Torre, reached Camelot where they meet with Sir La-
 vaine.

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
 And while she made her ready for her ride.
 Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear, 775
 'Being so very wilful you must go,'
 And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
 'Being so very wilful you must die.'
 But she was happy enough and shook it off,
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us ; 780
 And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
 'What matter, so I help him back to life ?
 Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates 785
 Came on her brother with a happy face
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet
 For pleasure all about a field of flowers:
 Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she cried,
 'Lavaine,

How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?' He amazed, 790
 'Torre and Elaine ! why here ? Sir Lancelot !
 How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot ?'
 But when the maid had told him all her tale.
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods
 Left them, and under the strange-statued gate, 795
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
 Past up the still rich city to his kin,
 His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot :
 And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
 Led to the caves: there first she saw the
 casque } 800

Sir Lavaine takes her to Lancelot, who is still very sick and is reduced to a skeleton.

Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve.
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
 Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart she
 laugh'd,
 Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
 But meant once more perchance to tourney
 in it

805

And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream
 Of dragging down his enemy made them moye.
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,

She gives
him the dia-
mond and
shortly leaves.
his presence.

810

Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
 The sound not wonted in a place so still
 Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his
 eyes

Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
 ' Your prize the diamond sent you by the
 King : '

816

His eyes glisten'd : she fancied 'Is it for me ?'
 And when the maid had told him all the tale
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt

820

Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.

Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.

At once she slipt like water to the floor.

825

' Alas,' he said, ' your ride hath wearied you.'

Rest must you have.' ' No rest for me,' she said,

' Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'

What might she mean by that ? his large black
 eyes,

Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwell upon her,

830

Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself

In the heart's colours on her simple face ;

And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
 And being weak in body said no more :
 But did not love the colour : woman's love, 855
 Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Elaine comes every day from Camelot to nurse Lancelot, and at last by her tender nursing, he recovers.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin ; 840
 There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and
 past

Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
 Thence to the cave : so day by day she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended him, 845
 And likewise many a night: and Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole. at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
 Uncourteous, even he : but the meek maid 850
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
 Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick child.

And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love 855
 Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all

The simples and the science of that time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
 Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine, 860
 Would listen for her coming and regret
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
 And loved her with all love except the love
 Of man and woman when they love of their best,
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the death 865
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her first

Lancelot loves Elaine like his own sister, and is prepared even to lay down his life for her sake.

She might have made this and that other world
 Another world for the sick man ; but now
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd him ; 870 A.
 His honour root'd in dishonour stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
 Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
 These, as but born of sickness, could not live : 875
 For when the blood ran lustier in him again, A
 Full often the bright image of one face,
 Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
 Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
 Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace 880
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
 Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
 What the rough sickness meant, but what this
 meant

She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,
 And drove her e'er her time across the fields 885
 Far into the rich city, where alone
 She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain it cannot be.
 He will not love me : how then ? must I die ?'
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
 That has but one plain passage of few notes, 890
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
 For all an April morning, till the ear
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
 Went half the night repeating, 'Must I die ?' 895
 And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
 And found no ease in turning or in rest :
 And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd, 'death or him,'
 Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole, When Sir
 To Astolat returning rode the three. 900 Lancelot is
 There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self all right they
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best, come to Asto-
 lat, He press- ed Elaine to

Elaine un-
 derstands
 from his atti-
 tudes that she
 cannot possi-
 bly win his
 love. In that
 case, death is
 the only
 alternative.

ask for some
gift, but she
remains
silent.

She came before Sir Lancelot for she thought
'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.' 905
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers, and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have ye done me, that I make 910
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can.'
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish, 915
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it : and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your wish.
Seeing I go to-day : then out she brake : 920
'Going ? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word.'
'Speak : that I live to hear,' he said, 'is yours.'
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke :
'I have gone mad. I love you : let me die.' 925
'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, what is this ?
And innocently extending her white arms,
'Your love,' she said 'your love—to be your wife.'
And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine : 930
But now there never will be wife of mine.
'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.' 934
And Lancelot answer'd, 'Nay, the world, the
world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation—nay,

At last on
the day of his
departure,
Elaine ex-
pressed her
desire to be
his wife. But
Lancelot who
loves the
queen, cannot
love Elaine ;
he tries to
console her,
but her grief
is beyond
consolation.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness! And she said,

940

'Not to be with you, not to see your face—
Alas for me then, my good days are done.'
'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of mine own self:

945

And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood, 950
More specially should your good knight be poor.
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy: furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood, 955
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied: 960

She faints
away and is
carried to her
tower.

'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,
And thus they bore swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of

yew

Their talk had pierced, her father: Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead. 965
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough courtesy
To blunt or break her passion.'

Elaine's
father who
has over-
heard the
conversation,
asks Lancelot
to cure her
of her passion
by treating
her with cru-
elness and
dis courtesy,

Accordingly
when Lanco-
lot departed,
he did not
bid her fare-
well.

Lancelot said,
"That were against me : what I can I will ;"
And there that day remain'd, and toward even 970
Sent for his shield : full meekly rose the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield ;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the easement back, and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had
gone. 975

And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound ;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bid farewell, but sadly rode away. 980
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

After Lan-
celot's de-
parture,
Elaine's con-
dition grows
hopeless. Her
father and
brothers try
to console her
but her des-
pair proved
too much for
her.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :
His very shield was gone : only the case.
Her own poor work, her empty labour, left. 984
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, 'Peace to thee,
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm. 990

But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd ; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms 995
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song 'The Song of Love and
Death,'
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.
'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain ;'

And sweet is death who puts an end to pain: 1001
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

Elaine sings
a pathetic
song of Love
and Death.

Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be
Love, thou art bitter: sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die. 1005

'Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.'

I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me; 1010
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'
High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and
thought

With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom of the
house

That ever shrieks before a death,' and call'd 1016
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we know, 1020
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay, 1025
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes,
At last she said, 'Sweet brothers, yestornight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood 1030
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt

Elaine begs
her father to
allow her
deadbody to
be taken to
the King's
palace,

Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
 And yet I cried because ye would not pass 1035
 Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
 Until we found the palace of the King.
 And yet ye would not ; but this night I dream'd
 That I was all alone upon the flood,
 And then I said, "Now shall I have my will :" 1040
 And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
 So let me hence that I may pass at last
 Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
 Until I find the palace of the King.
 There will I enter in among them all, 1045
 And no man there will dare to mock at me :
 But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
 And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me ;
 Gawain, who bad a thousand farewells to me ;
 Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bad me one : 1050
 And there the King will know me and my love,
 And there the Queen herself will pity me,
 And all the gentle court will welcome me,
 And after my long voyage I shall rest !

Her old
father and
brothers try
to cure her
of her pas-
sion by allud-
ing to Lance-
lot's guilty
passion for
the queen.

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my child, ye
seem 1055

Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
 So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
 On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all ?'

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
 And bluster into stormy sobs and say, 1060
 'I never loved him: an I meet with him,
 I care not howsoever great he be,
 Then will I strike at him and strike him down,
 Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
 For this discomfort he hath done the house.' 1065

To whom the gentle sister made reply,
 'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
 Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault

Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest.' 1070

'Highest?' the father answer'd, echoing 'highest ?'
(He meant to break the passion in her) 'nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest ;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame: 1075
And she returns his love in open shame ;
If this be high, what is it to be low ?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger ! these are slanders : never yet 1080
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain : so let me pass,
My father, howso'er I seem to you, 1085
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return :
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire ;
For if I could believe the things you say 1090
I should but die the sooner ; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven, 1095
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word : and when he ask'd
'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord ?
Then will I bear it gladly ; she replied,
'For Lancelot and the Queen and all the 1100
world,
But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote
The letter she devised ; which being writ
And folded, 'O sweet father, tender and true,

Elaine does not believe in the slanders about Lancelot and is not at all unhappy because she has loved the greatest man, though her love has not been required.

Elaine dictates a letter which she desires, should be put in her hand when she dies. With that letter, her dead body is to be taken to the dumb servant.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Deny me not,' she said—'ye never yet
Denied my fancies—this, however strange, 1105
My latest : lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it : I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died 1110
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge 1115
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to count, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone 1120
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'
She ceased : her father promised : whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death,
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.' 1125
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat. 1129
But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest smite, lay. 1135
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck.
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed. 1140

Within ten
days, Elaine
dies.

Her dead
body is placed
in a boat,
which is row-
ed by the
dumb man.

Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
 The silken case with braided blazonings,
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her
 'Sister, farewell for ever.' and again
 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears. 1145
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—
 In her right hand the lily, in her left
 The letter—all her bright hair streaming down—
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold 1150

Her body adorned in beautiful garments and she looks fresh even in her death.

Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
 All but her face, and that clear-featured face
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
 But fast sleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.
 That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved 1155
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
 The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
 With deaths of others, and almost his own,
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he
 saw 1160

That very day, Lancelot begs an interview with the queen.

One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
 With such and so unmoved a majesty
 She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet 1165
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
 The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
 And parted; laughing in his courtly heart.

And in an oriel on the summer side, 1170
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, 'Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for you, 1174
 These jewels, and make me happy, making them with rever-

Lancelot offers her the diamonds that he won in the tournaments with reverent homage.

- LANCELOT AND ELAINE -

An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it 1180
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in
words
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,
I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absuluter trust 1185
To make up that defect: let rumours be:
When did not rumour fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness.
I may not well believe that you believe.'

The queen
who is vio-
lently aggra-
ed accus-
ed Lancelot of
infidelity.

While thus he spoke, halt turn'd away, the
Queen
Broke from the vast oriel-embowering vine 1191
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off, . . .
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems 1195
There on a table near her, and replied:

'It may be, I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill, 1200
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these? 1294
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their
worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!

For her ! for your new fancy. Only this
 Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart. 1210.
 I doubt not that however changed, you keep
 So much of what is graceful : and myself
 Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
 In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule :
 So cannot speak my mind. An end to this 1215
 A strange one ! yet I take it with Amen.
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls ;
 Deck her with these ; tell her, she shines me down
 An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck 1220
 O as much fairer—as a faith once fair
 Was richer than these diamonds—hers not mine—
 Nay, by the mother of Our Lord himself,
 Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will—
 She shall not have them.' 1225

Saying which she seized, In a fit of
 And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat, uncontrolla-
 Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the ble rage, she
 stream. throws the diamonds in-
 Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were, and leaves to the river
 Diamonds to meet them, and they past away. the room to
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain 1230 weep.
 At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
 Close underneath his eyes. and right across
 Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night. 1235

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
 To weep and wail in secret : and the barge, In the
 On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused. meantime,
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the door ; to whom, the boat, car-
 All up the marble stair, tier over tier, 1240rying Elaine's
 Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd corse, rea-
 ches tho

palace. The people are struck with wonder at the sight of the beautiful body of Elaine and the dumb servant.

"What is it ?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks

1244

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,
'He is enchanted, cannot speak—and she,
Look how she sleeps—the Fairy Queen, so fair !
Yea, but how pale ! what are they? flesh and blood?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland ?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die, 1250
But that he passes into Fairyland.'

The body of Elaine is taken to the hall, and the letter read by King Arthur.

While thus they babbled of the King, the King Came girt with knights : turn'd the tongueless man

From the half-face to the full-eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors 1255
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;
And reverently they bore her into hall.

Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her, 1260
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her :
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all :

The letter contains a pathetic description of her disappointed love.

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat, 1265
Come for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere, 1270
And to all other ladies, I make moan :
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read : All present

And ever in the reading, lords and dames 1275 there, were
Went, looking often from his face who read deeply mov-
ed

To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, haif thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all : 1280,

'My lord hege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden' death
Right heavy am I : for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love

In women, whomsoever I have known 1285

Yet to be loved makes not to love again :

Not at my years however it hold in youth,

I swear by truth and knighthood thit I gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love :

To this I call my friends in testimony, 1290

Her brethron, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,

To break her passion, some discourtesy

Against my nature : what I could, I did.

I left her and I bad her no farewell ; 1295

'Tho,' had I dr. aint the damsel would have died,

I might have put my wits to some rough use,

And help'd her from herself'

Lancelot
explains that
she loved
him, and he
did all that
he cou'd to
cure her of
her passion.
He was too
old for her,
and he wished
that she might marry
one who was
more worthy.

Then said the Queen

(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)

'Ye might at least have done her so much grace,

1300

Fair Lord, as would have help'd her from her
death.

He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding,

'Queen, she would not be content

Save that I wedded her, which could not be. 1304

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Then might she follow me tho' the world she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
More specially were he, she wedded, poor, 1310⁴
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas
'To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, 'O my knight, 1315
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

Elaine was
buried with
great pomp
and grandeur.

So toward that shrine which then in all the
realm 1320
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen. 1325
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet 1330
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure ! which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and 1335
dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Lancelot where he moved apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, 'Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love.' 1340
He answer'd with his eye upon the ground,
'That is love's curse; passion, my Queen, forgiven.
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affection said,

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know 1346 Arthur ex-
What thou hast been in battle by my side, presses his
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt wish that it
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight, would be all
And let the younger and unskill'd go by 1350 for the best
To win his honour and to make his name, if Lancelot
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man loved and
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes, 1354
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it
seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have broght thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons 1360
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, 'Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye, 1365
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart—
'Yea, to be loyed, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,' said the King.
'Let love be free; free love is for the best.' 1370

In answer
to Lancelot's
plea that
love is free,
Arthur an-
swers that love
is free from
ignoble de-
sires, and
when it is so,
it attaches
itself to the
good and the
pure.

And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness ? yet thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.' 1375

Lancelot
 in a solilo-
 quy reviews
 his past life.
 The pathetic
 end of Elaine
 fills his heart
 with deep
 sorrow.

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her moving
 down,

Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said 1381-
 Low in himself, Ah simple heart and sweet,
 Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul ?

In a fit of remorse he wishes to break off all connections with Guinevere; his fame and glory are nothing to him, for he cannot enjoy a moment's peace. 1385

Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
 Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love?"
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
 May not your crescent fear for name and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that waues? 1390
 Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake.
 Caught from his mother's arms—the wondrous
 one

Who passes thro' the vision of the night— 1395
 She chanting snatches of mysterious hymns
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
 She kiss'd me saying, "Thou art fair, my child,
 As a king's son," and often in her arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere. 1400
 Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
 For what am I ? what profits me my name
 Of greatest knight ? I fought for it, and have it;
 Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;

Now grown a part of me : but what use in it ?
To make men worse by making my sin
known ?

1405

Or sin seemless, tho' sinner seeming great ?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me : not without 1410
She wills it : would I, if she will'd it ? nay,
Who knows ? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in the forgotten mire. 1415
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

NOTES

Introduction to the story.

Sir Lancelot was one of the bravest knights of King Arthur. He loved and was loved by Queen Guinevere, and their secret love-affair was talked about in the court; but King Arthur did not care to take notice of the rumour. When the king was leaving the court for the 'diamond tournament,' Sir Lancelot, in order to remain with the queen, pleaded illness and expressed his unwillingness to engage in the tournament. After Arthur's departure, the queen persuaded Lancelot to go to the tournament, because otherwise the rumour about their love-affair would gain strength and greater currency. It was therefore arranged that Lancelot would enter into the contest incognito. So, Lancelot left the court and proceeded towards the place where the diamond joust was to be held. On his way he came to the castle of Astolat. There he begged a shield, for if he carried his own shield, he would be at once recognised by its coat of arms. The Lord of Astolat gave him a blank shield, and his own was left in the keeping of Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat.

Elaine had fallen in love with Lancelot at almost the first sight, and she was, consequently, lovingly guarding the shield in the castle. The poem begins here and we are at once introduced into the story without any tedious introduction.

[The events that led to the commencement of the story are narrated in lines 28—396].

Ll. 1—27. *Elaine guarded the shield of Lancelot, which was sacred in her eyes. She made a silk-cover for it which she took off at times to examine it minutely. She often fell into romantic imaginings about the shield and its owner.*

L. 2. Lily maid—the maid as fair as lily, and as pure. Lily is an emblem of purity. Astolat—according to l. 1147 in the poem Tennyson's Astolat seems to be on the Thames to the east of London as the boat mentioned there drifts westwards from Astolot to Westminster in the flood-tide. But Malory who is the chief source of Tennyson for the Arthurian tales refers to Astolat as a town Southwest of London.

L. 3. Up—upstairs in a town.

L. 4. Guarded—watched over. Sacred—because she thinks that the shield has been left with her as a trust by Lancelot. [Elaine is in love with Lancelot, and therefore his shield is sacred to her].

L. 5. First—an adverb; at first. Earliest ray—the first ray of the morning sun.

L. 6. Strike it—fall upon it. Awake—rouse her from her sleep. Gleam—the brilliant reflection of the sun's rays on the polished shield.

L. 7. Soilure—stain; noun from the verb “soil.” Fashioned—designed; made.

L. 8. A case of silk—a silk cover (for the shield). Braided—made embroidery work; wove.

L. 9. Device—symbolic representation; a particular sign portrayed on the arms of a Knight to denote

some of his qualities or achievements. **Blazoned**—painted ('Blazon' is from 'blason' and old Fr. word meaning shield.)

L. 10. **Tinct**—shade, tint. In their own tinct—the embroidery work reproduced faithfully the shades of the original work on the shield.

Of her wit—out of her own fancy. i.e., she made a border of her own design.

L. 11. A border fantasy of branch and flower—a fanciful design of branches and flowers on the border.

L. 12. **Yellow-throated**—having a yellow throat. **Nestling**—a young bird; a bird too young to leave the nest. [The shield left by Lancelot with Elaine appeared to be sacred in her eyes; she guarded it most reverently, and lest it might be soiled with dust or rust, she prepared a silk cover for it. On the cover, she wove the device of the shield; but she made the border out of her own fancy. The border was ornamented with the picturesque presentations of flowers, branches and birds in their nests].

Paraphrase L. 1—12. The beautiful Elaine, who inspires affection in all human hearts, Elaine, the fair and pure maid of Astolat, was guarding the shield of Lancelot, which she looked upon as a solemn trust, in her room upon a tower situated on the eastern side of the castle. She placed the shield at first at a place where the first rays of the morning sun might fall upon it and their reflection on the bright shield fallen upon her eyes might wake her up from slumber. Then, afraid, lest rust or stain might disfigure it, she made for it a silk covering upon which she embroidered an imitation of the symbolic carvings on the shield reproducing faith-

fully the colour of the original. And out of her own fancy she added to it a border of fanciful design of branches and flowers with the picture of a young yellow-throated bird.

L. 13. Nor rested thus content—she did not remain contented with doing this only. Day by day—as the days passed.

L. 15. Barred—shut.

L. 16. Stript off—took off. Read—closely looked at; examined. Naked—uncovered.

L. 17. Guessed—imagined. Arms—the coat of arms; the “devices” mentioned in l. 9. Guessed.. arms—fancied that there was a subtle meaning behind the armorial bearings of the shield.

L. 18. Made—built up. Pretty history—a beautiful story.

L. 18. Dint—a stroke, a blow; a deep impression made by a blow. In modern English the word is retained in the phrase “by dint of.”

L. 20. Scratch—a slight mark.

L. 21. Conjecturing when and where—guessing when and where these scratches and dints were made and imagining “this cut is fresh” and so on. [In the shield, there were many cuts and scratches. Her fancy worked upon them, and she imagined to herself the history of each cut and stroke].

L. 22. Caerlyle—a place in Cumberland in England,—now spelt “Carlisle”. This dealt him etc.—this stroke was dealt to him at Caerlyle; he received this thrust at Caerlyle.

L. 23. Caerleon—in South Wales. Camelot—in Tennyson’s poems Camelot is an unlocated city, mystic in nature. Many people identify the city with various spots in England.

L. 24. God's mercy—shortened from "God's mercy save us" What a stroke—what a terrible stroke.

L. 25. Thrust—of the sword or the lance. God broke etc.—the strong lance, with which this thrust was dealt, was broken by God's mercy.

L. 26. Rolled his enemy down—threw his enemy down from the horse. [Elaine in her fancy exulted over the victories of her hero and pictured his enemies thrown down from their horse by the invincible strokes of Lancelot].

L. 27. Fantasy—fancy. Thus Elaine lived alone, picturing to herself the triumphs of Lancelot, and her love for him grew more and more.

Paraphrase Ll. 13—27. She did not remain satisfied with this only but as the days passed she left her domestic duties and her good father to mount upon that tower in the east and having entered the room bolted the door, took off the covering she had made of the shield and examined the shield closely. As she did so she imagined a hidden significance of the figures on the shield and invented for herself a beautiful story regarding every stroke or scratch on the shield given by the sword or the lance of an opponent. She made a guess as to where and when those blows were received. One cut was new, another possibly ten years old. Another possibly was given at Caerlyle, another at Caerleon and that other at Camelot. And then the sight of one terrible thrust made her heart almost sink down. It could have killed her knight but God saved him by breaking the strong lance of his opponent and by throwing him down from his horse. Thus she indulged in all sorts of wild and romantic fancies.

L. 28. Came by—got.

L. 29. She—the ‘lily maid’ (Elaine) in l. 28.
[The question may very well be asked as to how she got the shield of Lancelot].

L. 30. Tilt—charge with lance ; (here) contest.

L. 31. The great diamond—the account of this great diamond is given in the next para. Diamond joust—tournaments in which a diamond was given annually as prize.

L. 32. Ordained—appointed.

Paraphrase Ll. 28—33. (Now the question may be asked as to how Elaine got the shield of Lancelot ? She did not even know his name. The fact is that Lancelot left the shield with her when he went to contest for the diamond in the diamond tournament.)

Ll. 34—55. *Arthur while roaming about Lyonesse, before he became king, came across the skeleton of a king, who had been killed by his brother; there was a diamond crown on the skull of the skeleton. As he put the crown on his head he had a presentiment that he could one day become a king.*

L. 34. Arthur—A famous British chieftain and supposed King who is stated to have flourished in the 6th century and around whose life many beautiful legends have been written including Tennyson’s “Idylls of the King.” The origin of Arthur is obscure ; no one knew whence he came.

L. 35. Roving—wandering through. Trackless realms—regions without any paths ; pathless regions, i.e., in the wilderness. Lyonesse—a place that does not exist now and is supposed to have been once a projection of Cornwall coast, now swallowed up by the sea.

L. 36. Boulder—a large detached stone. Glen—a narrow valley. Tarn—a hill lake. Black—dark.

L. 37. A horror lived about the tarn—there was an association of terror with this lake. Clave—(p. of cleave) clung; stuck fast.

L. 38. Like its own mists—like the mists that spread over the mountains.

Ll 37—33. A horror lived etc—a miasma of horror hung about the place in the same way as mists spread over the lake.

L. 40. Their names were lost—their names were forgotten.

L. 42. Abhorred—hated. Made the glen abhorred—the vile deed committed on the valley, made it an accursed place, and nobody would ever come here.

L. 43. Bleached—whitened: the dead bodies remained there till their bones grew white.

L. 44. Lichen'd—covered over with lichen. Lichen is a kind of flowerless plant formed on stones and tree-trunks. Lichened... . . . crags—the bones were covered with lichen so as to look like crags. The bones were lichenized like the crags and so they were of the same colour. Crags—rocks.

L. 46 One in front—one diamond being in front. Aside—one each side (*i.e.*, there were 9 jewels in all: 8 small ones on two sides and a big one in front).

Paraphrase Ll. 34—46. Arthur whose origin was obscure was once wandering in the wilderness of Lyonesse long before his coronation. He came across a narrow valley with a huge rock and a small lake. A terror was associated with this lake and it hung over the

hill side like the mist over the lake. The reason of this terror was that the two brothers whose names are forgotten, but one of whom was a king, fought and killed each other, at one single blow. And the horrible and unnatural crime committed there made the valley detested of people. And their bodies lay there till all their bones were whitened by weather: and being covered with lichen they eventually looked the same colour as the stones on which they were scattered. One of them who was once a king had on his head a crown ornamented with one diamond in front and four diamonds on each side.

L. 47. Labouring up—going up with difficulty.
Pass—path.

L. 48. All—altogether (adv.). Misty moonshine—
moonlight bedimmed by mist. Unawares—without
knowing it.

L. 49. Had trodden etc.—had put his foot on the
crowned head of the skeleton.

L. 50. Brake—broke (old form). Nape—the back
of the neck.

L. 51. Rolled into light—rolled along in the dim
moonlight. Rims—edge.

L. 52. Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn—
as the crown rolled towards the lake, the brilliant
jewels on it on motion looked like a continuous
stream of sparkling water.

L. 53. Shingly—(adj. from 'shingle') covered
over with small pieces of stone. Scaur—hill-side.
Plunged—ran down the slope.

Ll. 54—55. In his heart heard murmurs—he
seemed to hear an inward whisper that he would
also be a king.

Paraphrase Ll. 47—55. Arthur, as he was going up with difficulty across the pass in moonlight bedimmed with mist, unknowingly put his foot upon the bony framework of that king's body with the crown upon its skull which got detached from the neck as Arthur trod upon it. The crown slipped off the skull and rolled through moonlight on its edge towards the lake and looked as it moved, like a narrow shining river. And Arthur ran down the hill-side covered over with pebbles, caught hold of the crown, put it upon his head and he felt some voice speaking softly within him. "Lo, you also shall be a king like this dead one."

Ll. 56—72. *Arthur got the nine diamonds plucked off from the crown and considering them public property, gave away every year as the prize to the best fighter in an annual tournament. Lancelot had won eight diamonds year after year with a view to present all the nine diamonds to the queen in order to capture her heart.*

L. 56. Thereafter—after that. When a king—when he became king. Gems—*i.e.*, diamonds.

L. 57. Plucked—taken off.

L. 58. Chanced—came across by chance.

L. 59. Divinely—directed by God. The jewels are the kingdom's—these jewels belong to the people of the kingdom.

L. 60. Use—utility *i.e.*, these jewels are for the service of the public. [Arthur means that as the jewels belong to the state, they ought to be utilised for the good of the state.]

L. 61. A joust....these—a tournament with one, of these as the prize (to be given to the best fighter).

L. 62. Proof—demonstration : test. Needs must learn—must necessarily learn (' needs ' is adv.)

L. 63. Mightiest—most powerful ; the bravest knight amongst us. And ourselves shall grow—the construction is—" And by nine year's proof ourselves shall grow" etc. we ourselves shall be better warriors, and shall develop our manly qualities more and more. Grow—advance : be more and more efficient.

L. 64. In manhood—in manly qualities. Drive—turn out.

L. 65. The heathen—the non-Christian people—referring to the Saxons and Norsemen who made frequent attacks on Arthur's England.

L. 66. Hereafter—after our time. Which God hinder—which we pray, God may avert ; Arthur prays to God that England may never fall into the hands of heathens.

L. 67. Still—always. Had been—had already taken place. [Every year, Lancelot won the prize].

L. 69. Purpose—object. Lancelot's object in winning the diamonds was to present them all to Queen Guinevere.

L. 70. All were won—i.e., all the diamonds were won. Meaning—intending. All at once—suddenly.

L. 71. Snare—to capture. Fancy—love. Boon—gift. To snare her....half her realm—to captivate the heart of the queen with a gift the value of which would be equal to half her dominions.

L. 72. Had never spoken—the nominative of this verb is "Lancelot" in 168 : Lancelot wanted to take Guinevere by surprise and present all the diamonds together. Hence he did not say anything to her about his intention.

Paraphrase Ll. 56—72. Later on when he became a king, he took off the jewels from the crown, showed them to his knights and said, "These jewels that I came upon by God's guidance are state property not the king's :—they are therefore to be used for the service of the public. From now on let there be one tourney every year for one of these diamonds as the prize. By nine years' test we will of necessity know who is the greatest fighter of us all, and in this way we shall so improve our manly qualities and skill in arms that we shall be able to scatter the non-Christian hordes, who, some think, will rule Britain after us. And may God avert this catastrophe." Thus he declared his intention. Eight years passed by and eight tournaments were held : Lancelot had always won the prize of the year with the object of presenting all the diamonds to the queen. But he had never said a word about it ; his ulterior motive was to capture the queen's heart all at once by a gift valued at almost half her dominion.

Ll. 73—95. Arthur announced a joust at Camelot for the central diamond. Queen Guinevere expressed her inability to go to the tournament on account of her illness. Lancelot thought that the queen wanted him to stay with her and offered an excuse for not joining in the tournament. At this, the king got a little suspicion and left them.

L. 73. Central diamond—the diamond in the centre of the crown.

L. 75. Hard on—close to. Nigh—near. The river—the Thames. The place which now is this world's hugest—London : the place which is now the biggest city of the world.

L. 76. Let proclaim—caused to be declared. Jousts—tournaments.

L. 77. The time—the time of the joust. Drew
nigh—approached.

L. 80. Fair—grand.

L. 81. Miss—fail to see. The great deeds—the
heroic achievements.

L. 82. Prowess—valour. Lists—enclosure of the
jousting arena: the place where tournaments were
held. In this sense the word is always used in the
plural form.

L. 83. A sight on....a sight which you are very
fond of seeing. (Queen Guinevere loved Lancelot
and so she loved to see the triumphs of her lover).

L. 84. Languidly—softly and lovingly. They
dwelt languidly—*i.e.*, the gaze of her eyes was fixed
softly on Lancelot.

L. 86. He thinking....there—he thought that by
her look, she entreated him to stay. Meaning—pur-
pose. He thought that her look gave him a hint to
stay behind.

L. 87. My love is more etc.—my love is more
precious than the diamonds that you may win at the
tournament.

L. 89. Love-loyal—obedient on account of his
love. Least wish—smallest inclination. He obeyed
the least wishes of the queen, because he loved her.

L. 90. Yearned—greatly desired; longed.

L. 91. Tale—the total number; the full quota.
Destined boon—the gift that he intended to pre-
sent to the queen.

Ll. 90—91. However much....boon—though he
ardently longed to win all the nine diamonds that he
intended to present to the queen.

L. 92. **Urged**—(its nominative is ‘ heart ’ in l. 88). impelled. **To speak against the truth**—to utter a falsehood. [Lancelot thought that the queen intended him to stay ; and so, though he was desirous to present all the nine diamonds to the queen, he put forth a false excuse to the king to stay].

L. 93. **Mine ancient wound is hardly whole**—the old wound on my body is not completely healed up. Lancelot pleaded that as his old wound was still giving him pain, he could not sit on his saddle.

L. 94. **Let me from the saddle**—does not allow me to sit on the saddle.

L. 95. **Glanced**—why did the king look at both of them ? Because he suspected something between them. It was rather impossible that Lancelot would not go to the tourney for such a reason, (for small old wounds could not hinder a fighter like Lancelot from competing in the joust when his victory was almost certain). **No sooner gone**—as soon as Arthur left the place, the queen said to Lancelot.

Paraphrase LI. 73—95. Now, Arthur, who was then holding his court close on the river Thames, near the place which is now the world’s biggest city, announced a tournament at Camelot for the central diamond of that crown—the last and the biggest one of them all. When the time of the tourney approached near, Arthur said to Guinevere who had recently fallen ill, “ Are you so ill, queen, that you cannot go to see these grand contests ? ” “ Oh you know it is so, my Lord ” said she. “ You will then ” replied Arthur “ be prevented form enjoying the sight of the valour and glorious achievements of Lancelot in the tournament. And you love to see that. ” At this the queen raised her eyes with a tender gaze on

Lancelot who stood by the side of the king. Lancelot imagined that the gaze of the queen meant to tell him.—“Stop here with me as I am ill. The worth of my love is more than that of many diamonds : ” he therefore resolved to stay. And though he ardently wished to complete the sum of diamonds for his intended gift to the queen, his heart, obedient to the smallest wish of the queen on account of the love he bore her, persuaded him to utter an untruth, ‘Sir King,’ said he, ‘the old wound on my body is not yet completely healed up and I cannot sit firmly on the horseback.’ The king looked suspiciously at them, looked first at Lancelot and then at Guinevere and left them.

N. B.—The characters are now gradually unfolding themselves. We know that Lancelot is in love with the wife of King Arthur and so is Guinevere with Lancelot. The King heretofore did not suspect this as his frank avowal in ll. 81-83 shows. But this unexpected refusal of Lancelot to go to the joust perhaps because the queen was ill, he thought, had some more weighty reason than what was given by Lancelot. He suspiciously left them. Though Lancelot’s love for the queen was illicit, still the strength of his passion can be realised from the fact that he, a knight, could sacrifice the highest championship in the realm for the sake of his love.

LL. 97—119. *The queen complains that the people would become suspicious if Lancelot stayed away from the joust. Lancelot returns a lover’s complaint that she previously did not care for people’s opinion. Note that the people almost approve their relations, she possibly has become tired of him and wants to be true to her husband—the faultless man.*

LL. 97. To blame—you are indeed to blame (for not going to the tournament).

L. 98. Go ye not—don't you go. Fair—just.

L. 100—101. Shamless ones—Lancelot and Guinevere. Who take their pastime—who make themselves merry. Now—now when. [The queen is afraid that a rumour about their conduct will get abroad ; the people will say that Lancelot is taking advantage of the king's absence to make love to Guinevere].

L. 102. Vext at having lied in vain—annoyed at having told a lie for nothing as the queen did not want him to stay. [Lancelot hated falsehood ; but he had spoken a lie to please the queen ; now he found that she actually reproached him for not going to the tournament. So he felt annoyed for having uttered a falsehood to the king for nothing].

L. 103. Are you so wise etc.—Lancelot begins with a touch of a little sarcasm. How could the queen be so discreet, because she was not so during the early days of their love ? [Now the queen seems to place the opinion of the world above her love ; she has become so discreet, because her love has cooled down]. Wise—discreet.

L. 105. Took no more account—did not take more notice ; did not take into consideration.

L. 106. Myriad—innumerable. Cricket—a kind of insect that buzzes at night-time and usually settles on blades of grass. Mead—*i.e.*, meadow.

L. 107. When its own voice etc.—when the cricket sits on the grass-blade and sends out its shrill voice from there.

L. 108. Every voice is nothing—no single sound of any of these crickets is worth any attention. Nothing—insignificant.

Explanation Ll. 105—108. Then of the crowd . . . is nothing—When Guinevere reproached Lancelot for staying behind and said that people would spread scandals about their conduct, Lancelot accused her of coldness towards him; he said that now she seemed to be afraid of popular opinion; but in the early days of their love, she had been totally indifferent to idle gossips and rumours. Then she had cared as little for the opinion of the crowd as for the noise of the innumerable crickets on the meadow. The shrill voice of the cricket, proceeding from the grass-blade, on which it sits, does not attract any notice whatsoever: similarly, the idle gossips of the people about the conduct of the queen and Lancelot, had been completely ignored by her in the spring-tide of their love.

L. 109. Them—obj. of the verb silence. Them surely . . . case—Lancelot can stop the mouths of the knights as he is dreaded by them all.

L. 110—111. But now . . . men—but now after this lapse of time my obedient devotion is approved by all men; sufficient time has elapsed since our relations began, and so the people do not find fault with my devotion towards you.

L. 111. Bard—poet or minstrel. Without offence—without any evil insinuation. [The poets sing about our relations without any evil suggestion or insinuation].

L. 112. Lay—poem, song. Linked—joined. [In their songs, they mention our names together but never suggest anything evil or unkind].

L. 113. Flower of bravery—the best of the brave.

L. 114. **The pearl of beauty**—the most beautiful of women, as pearl is the most beautiful gem among other precious stones.

L. 115. **Pledged us in this union**—drank to our health with our names united. [Both the bards and the knights seem to think that there is nothing objectionable in the devotion of the bravest of men to the fairest of women. In fact, it is quite natural that the bravest man and the most beautiful women should admire each other. Even King Arthur has never taken offence at this union of his queen's name with that of Lancelot].

L. 116. **The King would listen smiling**—The pure Arthur could never dream that his wife and his most trusted friend could prove so unfaithful to him. **Is there more?**—is anything more to be said on this matter?

L. 117. **Aught**—anything.

L. 118. **Devoir** - my devotion to you. [Lancelot actually reproaches the queen ; he enquires if, after all that has passed between them, the queen would prove false to him]. **Weary of my service**—sick of my love and devotion to you. Have you grown tired of my love that you want to go back to your pure and faultless husband.

Paraphrase Ll. 97—119. My dear lord Sir Lancelot you are much—much to blame. Why don't you go to join in these fine tournaments ? Half of the king's knights are hostile towards us and the people will say—"Look at these disgraceful creatures who are enjoying themselves in the absence of the king that so confides in them."

Then Lancelot was annoyed at having spoken a lie to Arthur and for nothing said, "Are you so discreet ? At least you were not so that summer

when you first made love to me. Then you took no notice of popular opinion. You cared for it as much as one cares for the noise of innumerable crickets that sing from the grass-blades in the meadow and send out all together a sharp shrill sound. As regards the knights, I can stop their mouth (because all of them fear me). And for the people, you know after this lapse of time my obedient devotion to you is approved of by all. Many singers without meaning any insult to us have united our names together in their songs,— referring in one breath to myself as the bravest of the brave and to yourself as the most beautiful of the beauties of the world. And our knights have at banquets joined our names together while drinking to our health and the king has listened to them with a smiling face. How do you say so then? Is there anything more which I don't know? Has Arthur said anything to you regarding this matter? Or do you now want to be a more faithful wife to your illustrious husband because you are tired of myself and my devotion?

N. B.—Now that the first intoxication of passion was past, Guinevere, just like all women, seems to be afraid of popular infamy. Lancelot feels piqued, an ardent lover as he is, at this discretion on the part of the queen; for lovers always prefer abandon to discretion in their beloved.

So far as Arthur is concerned we get a testimony from even Lancelot who, being his rival in love, can naturally be jealous of him, that he is a "faultless" man.

Lancelot, we learn, is, as the bards sing, 'the flower of bravery' and the queen 'the pearl of beauty,' and Lancelot seems to be quite conscious of his powers as he says, "As to knights, them surely I can silence with all ease!"

L. 120—139. *The queen protests that she is not Arthur's but Lancelot's because Arthur is too good for her. But she asks him to go to the jousts lest his stay behind should set vile tongues wagging.*

L. 120. Broke . . . laugh—burst into a low laugh of disdain. By her laugh, she seemed to express disdain both of popular opinion and of Arthur's love.

L. 121. The faultless king—the ideal king, who has no human faults or weaknesses.

L. 122. Passionate perfection—the very embodiment of perfection ; that faultless man, who passionately or ardently strives to attain ideal perfection. [Arthur's passion consists only in his desire to attain perfections. Since he is free from all human faults he is like a god, whom Guinevere cannot love ; Guinevere, a woman, wants to love a man ; but Arthur is a god, hence she cannot love him].

L. 123. But who . . . heaven—It is impossible to look upon the sun in the sky. [Similarly it is very difficult to love the spotlessly perfect man. The sun is the very embodiment of heat—hence the human eye can't look upon him ; so Arthur is the very embodiment of purity and perfection. Hence the human heart of Guinevere cannot be moved by him].

L. 124. Spake a word of reproach—reproached or rebuked me for my weaknesses.

L. 125. Glimpse—fleeting view. Untruth—falsehood ; infidelity. He never . . . untruth—he never in the least suspected my faithlessness to him ; he never cared to see whether I was untrue to him.

L. 126. He cares not for me—the queen concludes that Arthur does not love her because he is never jealous or suspicious about her relations with Lancelot. But as a matter of fact Arthur was too noble to suspect his own wife so easily.

L. 127. Gleamed—shone for a little while. Vague—dim: indefinite. There gleamed..eyes—there was just a shadow of suspicion in his looks.

L. 128. Some meddling rogue —some unduly busy knave.

Some meddling.....him—*i.e.*, some knave who had no business to poke his nose into our affairs has aroused suspicion in the king by throwing out sly hints about our relations. Has tamper'd with him—has influenced him. ('Tamper'—is from the same root as 'temper.' *i.e.*, to modify).

L. 129. Rapt—absorbed. Fancy—thought. Table Round—around this Round Table Arthur sat with his knights. The Round Table stands for the knights of King Arthur, who strove to make them perfect men by his own example and by sacred vows.

L. 130. And swearing... .impossible—making 'men swear vows that were not possible to be kept.

L. 131. To make him like himself—so as to make them pure and perfect like himself.

L. 133. A touch of the earth—something of human passions and short comings not merely divine perfection as Arthur has.

Explanation Ll. 131—134. But friend, to me he is all fault.....the colour—The queen explains to Lancelot that it is impossible for her to love Arthur, for Arthur is merely an embodiment of abstract perfection; one cannot love a mere personified abstraction. The very fact that one is faultless is a fault in her eyes because she cannot be intimate with an embodiment of perfection when she herself has a thousand defects in her composition. One who loves her should have some human weaknesses. The shortcomings of life are not an unmixed evil.

They impart variety and enjoyability to life, because a life of pure goodness would be monotonous indeed. The clouds to be given a beautiful colour require a rising or a setting sun, that is a sun low in the horizon and seemingly nearer the earth. The "sun in heaven"—high up in the sky and away from the earth (as Arthur is) cannot lend this grandeur of colour : it only emits scorching white light. Similarly Arthur is perfect and radiates the white rays of purity ; but he cannot love, and nor can a woman love him.

L. 135. Save by bond—except by marriage tie.
[I am Arthur's—in so far only as he is married to me ; but I am yours by the ties of love.]

L. 137. Tiny-trumpeting—making only a little voice.

N. B.—This is an instance of alliterative (*i.e.*, in which the same letter or sound repeatedly occurs) compound words that Tennyson is so fond of making for the sake of their musical effect. Other instances in the book are 'love-loyal' in l. 89, 'barren-beaten' in l. 160, green-glimmering in l. 481, strange-statued in l. 795 etc.

The tiny-trumpeting sweetest—A small gnat, though making only a very little noise is sufficient to spoil the enjoyment of our sweetest dream of love. Guinevere means that the idle gossips can shatter their dreams of love.

L. 138. Vermin voices—the whisper of vile persons. 'Vermin' literally means 'injurious insects.' The queen uses this word in contempt of the rabble.

L. 139. Buzz—make noise, hum. We scorn them but they sting—we may look upon them with contempt but they may injure us by their gossip.

✓ Explanation Ll. 137—139. The tiny trumpeting gnat....sting—Guinevere in explaining to Lancelot the necessity of his going to the tournament says that though she loves him, yet he ought not to stay behind, for the people would talk about their conduct. It is true indeed that the weak humming of the gnat may spoil the sweetest dreams of lovers. So the vile whisperings of the people about the conduct of Lancelot and Guinevere may be loud enough to injure them by arousing suspicion; though they have nothing but contempt for them, yet they should remember that they can spread scandals and by so doing shatter their sweet dreams of love. Hence Lancelot should go to the tournament.

Paraphrase Ll. 120—139. She laughed disdainfully a little and said, "My lord, Arthur the pure and faultless king is a mere embodiment of abstract perfection. It is not possible for me to love him, for we, ordinary people cannot look upon the sun, shining high in the sky. He never reproached me for my suspicious relations with you; he never had even a shadow of suspicion about my infidelity. He does not love me. Only today there flashed in his eyes a dim suspicion about us. Some busy-body of a knave has stirred suspicion in his mind; otherwise he is always absorbed in the thought of his Round Table and gets men to swear impossible oaths in order to fashion them in his own likeness. But, my friend, a faultless person to me personally seems to have serious defects. One who loves me must have some shortcomings incidental to human nature, as I myself have. It is the rising or the setting sun that lends a glow of glorious hues to the clouds. I belong to you, not to Arthur, except by the tie of matrimony. So, listen to me, go to the tournament. For, even the gnat that makes but

a little noise even shatter our sweetest dreams ; and the vile gossips here may be so loud as to injure us though we have nothing but contempt for them."

N. B.—We see that the queen knows her shortcomings and is hopelessly in love with Lancelot. So it is not so much the woman's concern for her reputation as her fear (that her secret relations with Lancelot might be so talked about as to betray her and put an end to her happiness) that urges her to ask Lancelot to go to the jousts.

We also know from the words of the queen that King Arthur is an embodiment of perfection. And because he is "too good for human nature's daily food" he cannot inspire love in her : she cannot love the cold virtue of the king. She can love one of her own sort and Lancelot is one of that sort, having many virtues, but also many weaknesses of human nature.

Ll. 140—144. *Lancelot does not know how he should present himself before the king after he had pleaded his inability to go to the tournament.*

L. 141. Face—expression on the face. With what face—*i.e.*, I cannot stand before the king with an honest countenance. Pretext made—the excuse that I put forth.

L. 143—144 Who honours God's—gives as much sanctity to his own word as he gives to God's words, (because Arthur's idea was that God's will expresses itself through a virtuous man's words.) Arthur says elsewhere. "Man's word is God in man."

Note on character. Even though infatuated by the beauty of Guinevere, all his better sense has not yet forsaken Lancelot ; he feels ashamed to present himself before his king, after having violated

the sanctity of his word. Arthur also holds his own word as sacred as God's word.

L. 144—157. *The queen advises Lancelot to go to the jousts incognito, so that he might win the victory there, without the dread of his name unnerving his foe. If he does this, the king will understand that he had put forth a false excuse for the sake of winning greater glory.*

L. 145. Moral child—perfectly honest, but simple as a child. Craft—cleverness. Without the craft to rule—lacking the shrewdness and cleverness to manage the affairs of the kingdom. A moral child . . . rule—Arthur is honest and pure-minded indeed, but he is as simple as a child. So, he is not shrewd and clever enough to rule his kingdom efficiently. [A king should be a diplomat in order to be an able and efficient ruler : but Arthur was far indeed from being a diplomat. He was the very embodiment of honesty and moral purity. Hence, according to Guinevere, Arthur was a faultless man but perhaps too faultless to prove an efficient ruler].

L. 146. Else had he not lost me—otherwise, he would not have lost my love. [If Arthur had been crafty and not pure and cold like a god, Guinevere would not have ceased to love him.]

L. 147. Wit—intelligence. If I must find you wit—if I must teach you the trick to get out of this muddle : if I am to furnish you with cleverness by means of which you can get out of this difficulty. We hear it said—people say.

L. 148. Go down—are thrown off their horse : are vanquished. At a touch—by the mere touch of your spear.

L. 149. But knowing you are Lancelot—when they know, you are Lancelot. Great name—your reputation. Nominative to ‘conquers.’ [Your very name strikes terror into the hearts of men, and conquers them].

L. 151. By this kiss—by this kiss that I give you I assure you, you will win in the tournament True king—the king who loves truth.

L. 152. ~~All~~^{Allow}—excuse. Pretext—pretence.

L. 153. All—entirely. Will then allow...glory—will excuse your false pretence on the ground that you made it only for the sake of winning greater glory. To speak him true—to give the truth about him.

L. 154. Right well—very well. Meek—gentle.

L. 154—55. How meek.....breathes—however gentle and peaceful he may appear to be, no one living pursues renown with greater ardour; he is an ardent lover of glory, though he may outwardly appear to be gentle and peaceful. Breathes—lives.

L. 156 It—glory. He loves it....himself—he likes more to see glory achieved by his knights than to achieve glory himself.

L. 157. They prove to him his work—his knights achieving glory justify the training given to them by Arthur *i.e.* their glorious achievements show that Arthur's training has been productive of good results.

Paraphrase Ll. 144—157. The queen said, “Ah, Had he not been merely a pure and upright man, and simple like a child, without any skill and cleverness to rule a kingdom, he would not have lost my love. But listen to me, if I am to teach you to get out of this difficulty. We hear people say that your adversaries are unhorsed at the mere touch of

your lance when they know that you are Lancelot. Your great name does this for you. So hide your name and go there incognito. By this kiss that I offer you, you will certainly be the winner. And King Arthur who is a lover of truth will then excuse your pretence for you have done it all for renown. For, to give a true account of Arthur, you know perfectly well however gentle he may appear to be, no one lives who pursues glory more enthusiastically than he. He prefers to see glory achieved by his knights rather than by himself, for they thereby justify his training. Win the prize in the tourney and come back to me.

N.B. Notice that in days of chivalry ladies delighted to see their lovers even risk their lives in the battlefield for glory. The queen besides, is very clever ; she finds for Lancelot a way out of the difficulty. The manner in which she talks about Lancelot shows that she is proud of Lancelot's prowess and is confident of his success in the tournament.

Other testimonies about the king's ideal character are pouring forth from the lips of Guinevere. We gather more of Arthur's character from other people's reports than from his own words and acts.

L. 159–185. *Unwilling to be recognised. Lancelot took an unbeaten track and chanced to come upon the castle of Astolat. There he was courteously received by the Lord of Astolat.*

L. 159. Wroth at himself—angry with himself (because he had misjudged the queen's thought, and because he had told a useless lie to King Arthur)

L. 160. Barren-beaten—hardened and made unproductive on account of people treading the soil. Thoroughfare—public road.

L. 161. Green path—path covered by grass. Rarer foot—scarcity of feet pacing on it; scarcity of foot-passengers ('This proved that the road was seldom used, and therefore lonely').

L. 162. Downs—open highland. (Specially the chalk uplands of S. and W. England).

L. 163. Full often—very often. Fancy—thought. Lost in fancy, lost his way—[Notice the rhetorical effect produced by the repetition of one word in two slightly different senses.] deeply absorbed in thought, he went astray from his path.

L. 164. Traced—followed. Faintly shadow'd track—the path with but a dim impressure of feet, showing that at times it was trodden by men.

L. 165. Loops—curves. Links—turnings; windings. In loops and links—in zigzag courses.

L. 167. Fired from the west—coloured by the rays (that looked like fire) of the sun setting in the west. Saw fired....towers—saw at a far distance, the towers of Astolat, which were lit up the crimson light of the setting sun.

L. 168. Made—went. Gate way horn—the horn that is blown to announce the arrival of a guest at the gate of a castle.

L. 169. Myriad-wrinkled man—a man having a large number of wrinkles on his features, owing to old age. [Another of those musical compound words so often coined by Tennyson].

L. 170. Who let him into lodging and disarmed—who led him to the room where he was to stay and took the arms off his body.

Paraphrase Ll. 158—170.—Then Sir Lancelot, angry with himself, abruptly mounted his horse. Unwilling to be recognised he avoided the frequented

roads made barren by treading feet, and selected the unfrequented path. There amidst the lonely open highlands, often completely absorbed in deep thought, he lost his way, till he followed a path, dimly marked by human feet and taking a zigzag course through the vales. This road led to the castle of Astolat. And he saw the towers of the castle on a far-away hill lighted up by the fire-red rays of the setting sun. He went in that direction and blew the horn at the castle gate announcing his arrival. Then came an old man who was dumb and had innumerable wrinkles on his features. The latter led him to the apartment where he was to stay and took off the arms from his person.

L. 171. Marvelling—wondered. Wordless—dumb; mute.

L. 172. Issuing—coming out of his room.

L. 174. Court—courtyard, quadrangle.

L. 175. The lily maid—the maid as fair as lily.

L. 176. Mother of the house etc.—the Lady of Astolat *i.e.*, the wife of Baron was dead.

L. 177—78. Some light.....down—they were indulging in some jocose talk that ended in a peal of laughter.

L. 179. Then the Lord of Astolat—supply the word 'said' after Astolat.

L. 180. Livest between the lips—are called by men *i.e.*, how people's lips utter your name. By what name etc.—by what name are you called by men?

L. 181. State—rank. Presence—noble appearance.

L. 182. Chief of those after the king—next to king Arthur, the greatest of the knights of the Round Table.

L. 183. Who eat in Arthur's halls—who dine round that famous Round Table of Arthur.

L. 184. Him—Arthur. The rest—the remaining knights. His table round—*i.e.*, the knights of the Round Table.

L. 185. Known as they are—though they are famous. To me they are unknown—because the baron lived a retired life.

Paraphrase Ll. 171—185.—And Lancelot wondered at the man that was without a word in his lips ; coming out of his apartment he saw the Lord of Astolat with his two vigorous sons, Sir Torre and Lavaine, coming forward to meet him in the courtyard of the castle. Closely following them walked the beautiful maid Elaine, the daughter of the Lord. There was no mistress of the house to be seen there.

Some trivial fun had been the subject matter of their talk which concluded with a loud laughter as the great knight Lancelot came to them. Then said the Lord of Astolat, “ From where dost thou hail, visitor, and by what name art thou known to people ? From your rank and noble bearing I can imagine you to be the greatest of the knights who dine in the hall of King Arthur. I have seen the king : But I don't know the remaining knights, though they are famous among men.

N. B.—We witness here the courtesy of the Lord of Astolat and his testimony to the noble bearing of Lancelot

Ll. 186—193. *Lancelot hides his identity and asks for a shield with which he might fight unknown.*

L. 187. Of Arthur's hall—(I am) of Arthur's hall.

L 187—188. Known, what I by mere . . . shield—prose order: what I, by mere mischance have brought—my shield (is) known; my shield, that I have brought by mistake, is also known to people. [Lancelot means that since he wants to contest incognito, he should not have brought his shield]. Mischance—mistake.

L. 193. Blank—without any device on it, a plain shield. Device—armorial bearing: coat of arms. With my device not mine—with some other device on it. If Lancelot takes another man's shield with a different device, he will not be recognised by the people.

Paraphrase Ll. 186—193. Then Lancelot the greatest of knights replied, "I am well known and belong to the Round Table; my shield that I have unfortunately brought with me is also widely known. But because I want to go incognito to the tournament at Camelot for the prize diamond, don't please ask me anything on these matters. Later on you will come to know about me and my shield. I request you to lend me a shield, if you have one, without any device upon it or with some other device which differs from mine."

Ll. 194—205. *The Lord of the castle offers Lancelot his eldest son's shield that is without a device because he had no great deed to his credit. He adds that his younger son is a bold fighter, who would go to the joust to win the prize.*

L. 194. Here is Torre's—i.e., here is Torre's shield.

L. 195. Hurt in his first tilt—wounded in his first encounter with another knight. Tilt—contest or combat between knights (in a tournament).

L. 196. God wot—God knows. Blank—having no device to signify his valour.

N. B.—His shield. enough—The custom was that when some knight did one noble deed, he was entitled to have carvings on his shield, but if he did more than one, he could have a symbol on his shield signifying his valour. But if he had no great action to his credit his shield would remain blank. And as Sir Torre was defeated even in the first encounter after he received knighthood, his shield was blank.

L. 197. Plain—plain-spoken, blunt in speech.

L. 198. Since I cannot use it—Since I am incapable of using it.

L. 199. Fie—shame upon. Sir Churl—the father in playful contempt calls his son ‘Sir Churl’ because he addresses Lancelot rather in a discourteous manner. ‘Churl’ means ‘a rude low-bred fellow.’

L. 200. Is that an answer etc—is that the way to address a noble knight?

L. 201. Allow him—addressed to Lancelot; excuse him (for his incivility). Lavaine—Lavaine was the younger son of the Lord.

L. 202. Lusthood—vigour.

L. 203. It—the prize diamond. Joust for it—fight for the diamond.

L. 204. Damsel—young maid i.e., Elaine.

L. 205. To make. before—the young lady will be very vain and wayward when she gets that famous diamond. This is playfully said by an affectionate father. [The daughter makes a fitting reply in ll. 745—46]. Wilful—wayward; obstinate.

Paraphrase Ll. 194—205. The Lord of Astolat then said, ‘Here is Torre’s shield, who was wounded in the first conflict after he received knighthood; and so God knows, his shield has nothing emblazoned on

it. You can take his shield. Then the blunt Sir Torre put in, "Ah, you may take the shield because I don't use it." At this the father of Torre laughed and said "Shame, O rude fellow, is that the way to address a noble knight? Excuse him (addressing Lancelot) for saying so. But Lavaine my younger son whom you see here is strong and vigorous. He will go to the tournament on his horse to fight for the diamond, and having won it would shortly bring it and set it in the golden hair of this maid here, who, wayward as she is, would then become three times so, out of her vanity.

N. B.—Sir Torre is a blunt young man who is embittered by his misfortunes early in life. Sir Lavaine is praised by his own father who is not unconscious of the merits and demerits of his sons.

Ll. 206—221 *Sir Lavaine feels shy at being praised by his father. But he is a bold and ardent youth and intends to contest for the demand. He knows he cannot win but will do his best. He asks his father's permission to go to contest with Sir Lancelot.*

L. 206. Shame me not—donot put me to shame (by praising me in this way before a noble knight).

L. 208. But—only. Played on—made a fun of.

L. 209. Sullen—ill-tempered. Vext he could not go—because he felt dejected, he would not like to go the tournament. Sir Lavaine says, he made fun of him to cheer him up.

L. 210. A jest no more—it was only a joke. Knight—Lancelot is addressed here. Maiden—Elaine.

L. 212. To slippery—too smooth. Slipped—dropped from the hand.

L. 214. Belike—perhaps. The castle-well, belike—Lavaine playfully says that perhaps the diamond fell down into the castle-well.

L. 215. If—the word, ‘if’ is italicised to denote that the occurrence is merely imagined ; Lavaine did not seriously mean what he said.

L. 217. Safelier—more carefully.

L. 218. An if—if. (‘An’ in shortened from ‘and’ which meant ‘if’ in old English. So, ‘an if’ means ‘if.’) An if he will—if he permits me.

L. 220. Win shall I not—Lavaine has no vanity ; he will try his best ; and though he knows that many veteran knights will contest and that he has no chance, yet he will make an effort.

Paraphrase Ll. 206—221. “No my good father, don’t put me uselessly to shame by bestowing on me the praise that I don’t deserve in presence of this great knight,” said young Lavaine ; “really speaking, I was only joking with Torre, for he appeared so gloomy and dejected that he would not go to the tournament. It was merely a joke and nothing more. Oh, good knight, this girl dreamt that somebody placed this diamond in her palm, and because it was too smooth to be caught hold of, it slipped out of her hand and fell into some pool or river, or perhaps into the well of the castle. Hearing this I said that if I competed in the tourney and won the diamond,— and it was but a joke among ourselves—she should be more careful about its safety. But father, please permit me if this knight has no objection, to ride to Camelot with him. I won’t win the prize, I know, but I shall acquit myself to the best of my ability. Though I am young, I would try my utmost.

N. B.—Sir Lavaine is a sympathetic brother to Sir Torre and has got all youthful enthusiasm and courage to acquire renown. He is modest and feels shy as he is praised by his father. Perhaps he even doubts whether his father’s praise is ironical.

L. 222-240. *Sir Lancelot gladly agreed to take Sir Lavaine as his companion and wishes that the latter may win the diamond for Elaine, whose beauty richly deserved it.*

L. 222. So—provided that ; on condition that. So you will grace me—provided you favour me. Lancelot assures him that he would be glad of his friendship provided Sir Lavaine guides him through these parts of the country unknown to him.

L. 223. Fellowship—company.

224. Waste downs—barren high lands. Where-on—on which. Lost myself—lost my way.

L. 225. Then were I glad etc.—in that case I would be delighted to have you as my friend and guide.

L. 227. Fair—either (1) an adv. modifying ‘large’, meaning, ‘pretty large’ ; or, (2) an adj. qualifying ‘diamond’—meaning, ‘beautiful.’ If he may—if you can win it.

L. 228. Yield—give. Will—wish. [If you so desire, you may give it to this maiden].

L. 230. Such be for queens etc.—such a diamond is fit for queens and not for simple maids like Elaine.

L. 231. Who held....ground—whose look was fixed downwards ; she being a modest girl, she could not look up in presence of a stranger.

L. 232. Tost about—talked about lightly by so many persons.

L. 232. Flushed—reddened in shame. Disparagement—slighting remark : the remark of Sir Torre that she was a very plain girl. Flushed slightly... disparagement—blushed at this rather damaging remark

of her brother Sir Torre that she was a very 'simple maid'—a plain girl, who was not worthy to possess such a big diamond [Sir Torre's remark shows a brother's usual callousness to a sister's beauty.]

L. 235. **Courtly**—courteously; in a chivalious manner. **Full courtly yet not falsely**—with perfect courtesy and without any flattery or pretended admiration of her beauty. **Falsely**—insincerely. **Returned**—said in reply.

L. 236. **If what . . . fair**—If beautiful things are meant for beautiful persons.

L. 237. **Counted**—regarded. **So**—*i.e.*, beautiful. **And only queens . . . so**—and queens only are to be regarded as beautiful.

L. 238 **Rash**—hasty. **Rash were my judgment then**—my opinion would then considered wrong. **Deem**—consider.

L. 239. **Might wear . . . earth**—is worthy of putting on the most beautiful jewel in the world.

L. 240. **Not violating . . . like**—without going against this principle that beautiful persons should own beautiful things. **The bond of like to like**—the tie that links together similar things. [A diamond is a thing of beauty and should therefore be won by beautiful ladies. Elaine, who is exquisitely beautiful, can therefore fittingly wear this beautiful jewel].

Explanation Ll. 236—240. **If what is fair . . . like to like**—When Sir Torre speaks disparagingly of Elaine and remarks that a simple girl like her is unfit to wear a beautiful diamond, Lancelot replies that she is quite fit to wear it. If beautiful things are meant only for beautiful persons and if only queens are to be considered beautiful and none else, then my opinion that this maiden can rightly put on the fairest jewel

on the earth, may be a little too bold, because she is not actually a queen. But in giving this opinion I do not go against the principle that beautiful things are meant for beautiful persons, for Elaine is really beautiful, and is therefore entitled by the law of like to like to wear the most beautiful jewel.

Paraphrase Ll. 222—240. Lancelot answered with a smile, "Provided you favour me with your company over these barren uplands in which I lost my way, I would be very glad indeed to secure you as a guide and a friend. And if you can, you will win this diamond,—and I am told it is a fairly big one—and give it to this maid. "A beautiful and large diamond," retorted the blunt Sir Torre, "is suited only for queens and not for a simple maiden like herself." Then Elaine who cast her gaze on the ground, felt abashed to hear her name passing from lip to lip and blushed at the slighting remark made by her brother before an unknown knight. Lancelot, looking at her replied in a perfectly courteous and sincere manner,—"If beautiful things suit beautiful persons, and if only queens are to be reckoned beautiful, I would then be considered hasty in my judgment, for I hold that this maiden might put on the fairest jewel in the world, and by holding this opinion I do not go against the law of like to like that is to say, of beautiful things for beautiful persons.

N.B.—Sir Lancelot shows his frankness and good breeding when he alludes to the charms of Elaine who feels a little ashamed at the slighting remarks made about her by her brother Sir Torre.

Ll. 241—259. *Though Lancelot's guilt considerably impaired the beauty of his face, yet his higher self was not altogether extinct, and Elaine fell in love with him at the very first sight.*

L. 241. Ceased—stopped. The lily maid—an instance of permanent epithet (employed by Homer in his epics).

L. 242. Mellow—soft and sweet. Won by the mellow.....looked—charmed by the sweet voice of Lancelot, even before she looked at him.

L. 243. Lifted her eyes—raised her eyes and looked at him. Read his lineaments—observed his features.

L. 244—245. Bare—bore. His lord—*i. e.*, King Arthur. The great.....lord—The struggle between Lancelot's profound but sinful passion for the queen and his love for King Arthur, his master. [Though he passionately loved Guinevere, yet he felt in his heart of hearts that he was wronging his king, the pure and god-like Arthur].

L. 246. Had marred his face—had spoilt the grace of his appearance. [The nominative of this verb is 'love' in 1244]. Marked it ere his time—left its stamp upon his features, making him look older than his years; covered his face with lines and wrinkles. Ere his time—before his time; prematurely. [His face was prematurely lined with wrinkles].

L. 247. Sinning on such heights—having illicit intimacy with a lady of lofty rank (*i. e.*, Guinevere); sinning with the queen.

L. 248. The flower....world—The most beautiful and exalted of women not only in the western countries, but in the whole world.

L. 249. Had been—would have been. The sleeker—more merry and good-looking.

L. 247—249. Another sinning on such.....sleeker for it—another man, with a less exacting conscience than that of Lancelot, would have looked

bright and happy, if he had such illicit intimacy with the queen [Lancelot was not really happy, because he was intensely conscious of his guilt].

L. 250. Mood—the temper of his mind. Rose—asserted itself. Fiend—demon. His mood was often like a fiend—the fit of his passion often tormented him like a devil.

L. 251. Wastes and solitudes—solitary and desolate places.

L. 252. For agony—on account of his conscience pricking him (for indulging in secret and guilty love); on account of the twinges of his conscience. [Lancelot felt bitter remorse for giving way to his sinful passion for Guinevere, but he could not control his passion]. Who was yet a living soul—whose finer nature was not yet blunt or dead.

Explanation Ll. 249—252. But in him his mood a living soul—Lancelot who had illicit relations with Guinevere, looked care worn and older than his years. Another man in a similar situation would have looked bright and gay; but Lancelot was intensely conscious of his guilt and suffered terribly in consequence. But his passion was so strong that he could not control it. At times, he would be seized with bitter remorse and wander about in solitary and desolate places in sheer agony, like one possessed by the devil. Thus, though Lancelot had guilty relations with the queen, he had not lost all his finer feelings; the fact that he felt remorse for his illicit intimacy with the queen, showed that he still retained traces of his innate nobility.

L. 253. Marred as he was—Though his external beauty was partially spoilt. Goodliest—the most handsome.

L. 254. That ever among etc.—who ever associated with ladies in the court.

L. 255. And noblest, when she etc.—Lancelot appeared to her to be the noblest of men, when she looked at his face.

LI. 253—255. Marred as he was.....eyes—though the elegant grace of his countenance was considerably impaired by his sense of guilt, yet he appeared to be the noblest and handsomest of knights in the eyes of Elaine.

L. 256. Of more than twice—Lancelot was twice as old as Elaine.

L. 257. Seamed—disfigured by the scar of a wound. Seamed with an ancient etc.,—there was on his cheek the scar of an old wound.

L. 258. Bruised—having many marks of wound. Bronzed—tanned ; his complexion was sun-burnt on account of hard outdoor life.

L. 259. Doom—ruin : destruction. Which was her doom—which was ultimately to cause her ruin.

Paraphrase LI. 241—259. So said he and then came to a pause. The fair Elaine, who was charmed by his soft and sweet voice even before she had looked at him, now raised her eyes and observed his features. The deep and illicit love that he had for Guinevere was always in conflict with his love for his master King Arthur, and this had the effect of spoiling the beauty of his appearance and showed him older than his age. Any other person, having illicit relations with a lady of high rank like the queen, who was considered to be the most beautiful and exalted of women in the west, or rather the world, would have looked gay and bright. But Lancelot's better nature at times rebelled within him and drove him

(as though he were possessed by a devil) to deserted and lonely places to brood over his sin as his conscience pricked him. This shows that his higher self was not altogether lost. Though there were marks of guilt and suffering on his face, he appeared to her eyes to be the noblest and most handsome of men who associated with court-ladies. Though he was more than twice as old as she and had a sun-burnt skin and an old scar across his cheek and was covered with various other marks, she loved him at the first sight, with a love that was eventually to bring about her destruction.

N. B.—Lancelot is indeed a grand personality even in his fallen state. His nobility has not forsaken him and he is a pathetic victim of the pricks of his conscience.

Elaine the innocent maid falls in love with Lancelot, and as we shall presently see her love is her 'doom.'

Ll. 260—279. *Lancelot was given a grand reception in the castle-hall. During their conversation, the Lord of Astolat told him how he had lost his castle to the Saxons and afterwards regained it.*

L. 260. Darling—favourite; beloved. Darling of the court—dear to the king and his courtiers.

L. 261. Loved of the loveliest—loved by the fairest lady i.e., the queen.

Rude—primitive.

L. 262. Slept—entered. With all grace—with perfect courtesy and elegance. Half-disdain—partial contempt (for these rude people); though the baron and his sons were rude and uncultured Lancelot did not look upon them with contempt or disdain.

L. 263. Hid under grace—concealed beneath an externally refined manner.

As in a smaller time—as is proper in an age less cultured and civilised than that of King Arthur. The age of Arthur was truly liberal and cultured and Lancelot was the very pink of courtesy. When he entered the hall of Astolat, there was not the slightest trace of contempt or disdain in his attitude, as is usually found among the proud persons of a less civilised age.

L. 264. Kindly—sympathetic. Kind>equals in rank.

L. 262—64. Slept with . . . kind—Lancelot gracefully entered into that primitive hall and his attitude was not one of partial contempt disguised under a show of courtesy as is usual with important men belonging to a pettier age than Arthur's. But Lancelot was a model of courtesy and appeared to be a sympathetic visitor moving among his equals in rank.

L. 265. Vintage—wine.

Meats and vintage etc.—the best food and wine that they possessed.

L. 266. Minstrel melody—songs of their bards.

Entertained—pleased (connected with 'with' in l. 265.) The construction is "whom they entertained with meats" etc.)

L. 267. Much they asked etc.—they asked him many questions about the court.

L. 268. Readily—promptly.

L. 269. Glanced at—incidentally talked of; referred to.

L. 270. Suddenly speaking . . . man—Lancelot wanted to change the topic and all of a sudden turned the discussion on that man who received him but did not talk to him.

L. 272. The heathen—the non-Christians; the pagans.

Reft—(poetic abbreviation of ‘bereft’): deprived.
[The heathens had cut off his tongue ten years back].

L. 273. Learnt—came to know. Fierce design—
terrible plot

L. 274. Maimed—mutilated him by cutting off
his tongue. [Because he had given timely informa-
tion of their plot, the heathens took revenge upon
him by cutting off his babbling tongue.]

L. 275. Bonds or death—imprisonment or death.
[If they had not been informed in time, they would
either be thrown into dungeon or put to death.]

The great river—*i.e.*, the Thames.

L. 278. Dull—miserable. Broke—destroyed the
power of; crushed.

L. 279. The pagan—the heathens or non-Chris-
tians.

Yet once more—once again; in the last of his
great fights with the heathen Saxons.

Badon hill—This battle is a historical one as men-
tioned by Gildas in his History of Britain. Other-
wise King Arthur as portrayed by poets is almost
purely a mythical figure.

Paraphrase Ll. 250—279. Then the famous knight,
who was the favourite of Arthur’s court and the beloved
of the fairest lady in the world, very politely entered
into that primitive hall; Lancelot was a model of cour-
tesy, and in his attitude, there was not that feeling of
contempt disguised under the show of outward cour-
tesy, which is usually found in persons of impor-
tance in an age less noble than that of Arthur; he
behaved in the most polite manner, like a kind, good-
natured man among his equals. Those people enter-
tained him with their best food and wine, conversation

and songs of their bards. And they asked him many questions about the court of Arthur and his Round Table ; and Lancelot politely and promptly answered all their queries. But when they incidentally referred to Guinevere, Lancelot in order to avoid talking about her, suddenly turned the conversation to the dumb man who had received him at the castle, and heard from the Baron that the heathen Saxons had caught him and cut off his tongue ten years before. 'He came to know about their terrible plot,' said the baron, 'against my family, and gave me previous warning. This is why they caught and mutilated him. But I with my children escaped captivity or death by fleeing from the castle and lived in the forests by the side of the river Thames in the cottage of a boatman. They were wretched days indeed for us, which terminated when Arthur once again destroyed the power of the heathens in the battle of Badon hill.'

N.B. —Lancelot, though a great knight, does not exhibit any trace of scorn or disdain, when he is received by those rude dwellers of the castle. He is not only a great fighter but a perfect gentleman. Again, he is of a sensitive nature. Though he loves Guinevere, he does not like to talk about her, for he is keenly conscious of his guilt. A talk about her evidently makes him ill-at-ease.

From the words of the baron we get a proof of King Arthur's valour who crippled the powers of the heathen Saxons.

L. 280—315 *In answer to Lavaine's question, Sir Lancelot mentions some of Arthur's great battles and remarks that there is no greater leader living than Arthur.*

L. 280. There—in the battle of Badon hill.

Doubtless—certainly; adv. modifying 'fought' in
l. 282. Rapt--absorbed, enraptured.

L. 281—82 Sudden passion of youth—the ardour and enthusiasm which is suddenly exhibited by a young man when he perceives greatness in superior persons. [Sir Lavaine was filled with ardent and enthusiastic admiration for Sir Lancelot, when he perceived his greatness.]

L 283. We live apart—we live in entire seclusion and cannot therefore know what happens in the outside world.

L. 284. Arthur's glorious wars—the great battles fought by Arthur to drive away the heathens from England.

L. 285. At full—in detail.

L. 287. Rang—raged noisily. White mouth—mouth of the river filled with foamy waters falling into the sea. The violent Glen—the very rough and rapid stream known as the Glen.

L. 289. Duglas—a stream in Scotland. Barsa—river, (which it is almost impossible to identify correctly).

[N.B.—The battle fields here mentioned cannot now be definitely identified. There are various opinions even regarding the location of these place

L. 290. Thundered—raged violently. Skirts—borders.

L. 291. Celidon—the forest of Celidon is supposed to have existed in Cornwall.

L. 292. The glorious king.—King Arthur.

L. 293. Cuirass—breast-plate. Lady's Head—an image of Virgin Mary. [Some say Mary's image was on Arthur's shoulders, some say on his shield. Spenser places the image on his cuirass in his "Fairy Queen," from whom perhaps Tennyson takes the idea].

L. 294—295. Carved of.....breathed—Virgin Mary's image was carved out of one emerald that was placed at the centre of a silver sun with bright rays shooting out of it. This silver sun glittered as Arthur chest heaved as he breathed.

L. 295. Lightened—shone; sparkled. That lightened....breathed—which glittered and sparkled as his breast rose and fell with breathing.

L. 296. He helped—*i.e.*, Lancelot helped.

L. 297. The strong ... Horse—the fierce attacks of the Saxon army whose emblem was a white horse (as Britain's now is a rampant lion).

L. 298. Set every gilded parapet shuddering—shook the houses with their ornamental roofs and ceilings. Parapet—low wall on the roof; it stands for the 'roof' itself. [The attacks of the Saxons were so fierce that the roof of the houses seemed to tremble.]

L. 299. Up in Agned Cathregonion—upon the mount named Agned Cathregonion.

L. 300. Down the....Trath Treroit—along the barren and sandy banks of the river called Trath Treroit.

L. 301. Fell—were killed.

L. 303. At the head of all his Table Round—as the leader of all the Knights of his Round Table. Charge—attack; lead the attack.

L. 304. Legions—large army. Crying Christ and him—crying for Christ's name and Arthur's. [Christ and Arthur' seemed to be the war-cry of army of Arthur].

L. 305. Break them—disperse their lines. After—afterwards.

L. 306. On a heap of slain—on the pile of the bodies of heathen soldiers killed by Arthur. From spur to plume—from spur which is worn at the heels to the plume worn on the head, *i.e.*, from head to foot. Spur—spike attached to the heals of a horseman to prick the sides of his horse.

L. 307. Red as blood—covered all over with the blood of the infidels and hence looking as crimson as the rising sun. [Arthur looked majestic like the rising sun, when he stood red with the blood of the heathens].

L. 308. In a great voice—loudly.

L. 311. Triumph—victory. Mimic wars—sham fights, namely the jousts.

L. 312. Cast him down—defeats him.

L. 313. He laughs saying his Knights them he—Arthur obviously did not fight seriously. He would let his knights defeat him, in order to encourage them.

L. 314. Heathen war—battle with the non-Christians. The fire of God—divine powers. [Arthur seems to be filled with divine enthusiasm when he fights the heathens]. I never saw his like—I have never come across a warrior like Arthur.

Paraphrase Ll. 280—315. O there, great lord no greater leader—“O great knight, you have undoubtedly fought there,” said Lavaine, carried away

by the fresh and sudden enthusiasm that young men feel in observing heroism in their elders. "O great lord, relate to us, for we dwell in seclusion, the account of Arthur's renowned wars that you so well know." And Lancelot in reply gave him the details in full, as he had accompanied Arthur in the battle that raged all day by the foamy mouth of the river Glen and in the battles fought in the shores of the rivers Duglas and Bassa. Then he gave an account of the war that raged through the forest of Celidon and its dismal borders and then the battle fought near the Castle Gurnion where the great King Arthur wore on his breast-plate the face of Virgin Mary carved out of an emerald that was placed in the centre of a sun made of silver; this head of the Virgin glittered as his chest heaved in breathing. At the city of Caerleon Lancelot stood by his master when the tremendous attack of the Saxon army, having a white horse as their symbol on their banner, shook the ornamental roofs of every house in the city. Lancelot had also fought by Arthur's side high up over the mountain of Agned-Cathregonion and also down the barren and sandy coast of the river Trath Treroit where many pagans were killed. 'And', added he, 'on the hill of Badon I myself saw the king lead the attack at the head of his knights of the Round Table, and his vast army shouting their war-cry of 'Christ and Arthur.' Then he totally routed the Saxons. As I saw him again, later, standing high on a pile of dead bodies, looking majestic like the rising sun, red with the blood of heathens from head to foot, he cried out to me in his majestic voice, "They are defeated, they are defeated." For, the king, though he looks so soft-natured at home, and though he does not care for victory in these sham fights—these tournaments—(for if one of his own knights defeat him there he laughs, saying that he

is inferior to his knights) yet in these fights with the pagans he seems to be inspired by divine courage and enthusiasm. I never saw his equal, there is no greater commander than Arthur."

N. B.—Though Lancelot is the king's rival in love, he, like ordinary men is not jealous of the king. He is a great admirer of his king, and is conscious of his inferiority to Arthur in every respect.

Ll. 316—396. *Elaine fell in love with Lancelot and kept awake throughout the night, thinking about him. In the morning as Lancelot and Lavaine were going away, she asked Lancelot to wear her favour in the tournament; though he declined at first, he agreed ultimately, for it would enable him to hide his identity better, as he had never before worn a lady's favour. Lancelot then took Sir Torre's shield, and left his own famous shield in charge of Elaine till his return, Elaine considered this a great favour to her and began to entertain high hopes about winning the love of Lancelot.*

L. 317. Low—softly. To her own heart—with-in herself.

L. 318. Save your great self—Elaine modifies Lancelot's statement that there is no greater leader than Arthur by saying to herself 'There is no greater leader than Arthur except your own self; i.e., you too are as great a leader of men as King Arthur. Save—except. Fell—changed.

L. 319. Traits of pleasantry—mirthful talks.

L. 320. Stately—dignified. Being mirthful.... kind—he was fond of jollity but in a dignified manner; even in his mirth and pleasantry, he maintained his dignity.

- L. 321. Still—always. Living smile—lively smile.
- L. 322. Died from his lips—vanished from his lips.
- L. 322. Cloud—shadow; gloom.
- L. 323 Melancholy—great sorrow. [Elaine observed that at times Lancelot's smile faded from his lips and his face grew dark with gloom and melancholy].
- L. 324. Hovering to and fro—moving from one topic to another.
- L. 325. Had striven—had tried. To make him cheer—to entertain him. Cheer—entertainment; hospitality.
- L. 326. Brake—'broke' i.e., was revealed. Sudden-beaming tenderness—a sudden expression of affection (from Lancelot).
- L. 327. Tenderness of manners and nature—courtesy and affection. [His softness and affection were due partly to his social formality and partly to his sincere feelings.
- L. 328. All was nature—all the tenderness that shown in his face was due to his real feelings (of love) for her. All, perchance, for her—she thought that perhaps all this tenderness was roused by her and meant for her. She was herself in love with Lancelot and so she thought that Lancelot was also in love with her.

Paraphrase Ll. 316—328. While he uttered this perchance for her—While Lancelot said so, the fair maid said softly within herself 'There is no greater leader than Arthur except yourself, my great lord;' and when he came down from the talk of war to the homely level of humorous talk, (as he was of

a jolly disposition though of a dignified character), she always noticed that when the vivacious smile disappeared from his lips a gloom of deep sorrow overshadowed his face. As she tried to remove this gloom and cheer him up by the diversity of talk, there beamed in his face a sudden expression of softness and affection, that was due partly to his conventional politeness and partly to his true feelings. And she thought his tenderness was all due to the sincere feelings of his heart, perhaps to his growing love for her.

L. 329. Lived—persisted. His face....lived—the vision of his face floated before her eyes. [Elaine was already in love with Lancelot; and so she remained awake throughout the night, picturing to herself the handsome face of Lancelot].

L. 330. Poring—intently gazing.

L. 331. Divinely—with his God-given power. Hindrance—obstruction. [The 'hindrance' is the external appearance of a man, which hides his real nature]. Finds the man—discovers the inner nature of the person. Through all hindrance....behind it—penetrates through the veil of his outward expression and appearance, and sees his true character.

L. 332. Behind it—*i.e.*, behind his external appearance. So paints him—paints him in such a way.

L. 333. Shape and colour of a mind and life—true portrayal in all details of his inner nature and character.

L. 334. Lives—is perpetuated. At its best and fullest—in its most perfect representation, showing his qualities to the best advantage.

L. 336. Dark-splendid—gloomy and dignified. Silence—*i.e.*, of the night. Speaking in silence—most eloquent and expressive even in the silence of night.

L. 337. Full of noble things—expressive of noble qualities. Held her from her sleep—kept her awake all the night.

Explanation Ll. 330—337. As when a painter...: . .from her sleep—The face of Lancelot, gloomy but grand, floated before Elaine's fancy and, seemed to speak to her in the calm of the night; it gave her a clear indication of his greatness and noble character, and did not allow her to sleep. She meditated in the silence and darkness of night, the face of Lancelot and divined his noble character in the same way as a painter who intently gazing on a face, finds out by his divine gifts the inner nature of the man in spite of the veil of outward appearance, and paints him in such a manner that the real nature and character of the person at their perfection are arrested on the canvas and perpetuated for the delight of his children.

L. 338. Rathe—early; (a Middle English adjective of which the comparative form 'rather' still survives). Half-cheated in the thought etc.—partly deceiving herself with this idea that she rose so early only to bid adieu to Lavaine. [In reality, she rose early in order to see Lancelot before he departed; but she did not like to confess it even it to herself: she therefore tried to believe that it was to bid farewell to Lavaine that she had risen so early in the morning].

L. 339. Needs—of necessity; of course.

L. 340. Stole—walked softly and silently.

L. 342. Anon—presently. Court—courtyard.

L. 343. This shield—*i. e.*, the blank shield of Sir Torre which was promised to Lancelot.

L. 344. Past—passed ; stepped.

L. 346. Glossy—shining. Humming—singing softly.

L. 347. Half-envious hand—half-jealous that the hand of Lancelot should so caress the horse and never perhaps caress her. Drew—approached. Flattering—caressing.

L. 348. Amazed—astonished.

L. 349. Set upon him—attacked him. Seven—an indefinitely large number,—not exactly seven.

L. 350. Dewy light—in the little light of the damp morning. [The light was not dewy, but the morning was dewy : an instance of transferred epithet].

L. 348—350. He looked . . . dewy light—he looked at Elaine standing there in the dim light of the morning. He was in fact more astonished to see her there than if he were to be suddenly attacked by ten men at a time.

L. 351. Not dream'd—never for a moment thought.

L. 352. A sort of sacred fear—a kind of holy awe, because so pure and innocent a girl was intently gazing at him at that strange hour.

L. 353. Silent—adv. modifying 'stood.' [Though Lancelot saluted her, she did not speak a word].

L. 354. Rapt—engrossed, absorbed. A god's—*i.e.*, a god's face. [Elaine was so fascinated by the face of Lancelot and was looking at it so intently that it seemed that she was looking at the face, not of a man but of a god. Lancelot was almost filled with awe at this wonderful sight].

Paraphrase Ll. 340—354. First as in fear . . . it were a god's—At first, as if afraid, she walked softly step by step down the lengthy range of stairs of the tower, undecided whether she should proceed or not. Presently she heard Sir Lancelot shout in the quadrangle, "Where is that shield, my friend?" Lavaine then went inside as she issued out of the tower. Lancelot was brushing the smooth and shining neck of his horse with his hand singing softly to himself.

Elaine, feeling almost jealous of the horse, who was caressed by Lancelot, came and stood beside him. Lancelot cast his glance towards her and was more astonished to see the beautiful maid standing in the dim light of the morning than if he were suddenly attacked by a large number of men. He had never imagined she was so fair. Then he suddenly felt a kind of holy awe, because though he wished her good-morning, she stood silently absorbed in looking at him as if he were a god.

L. 355. Flashed on her—occurred to her suddenly (like a flash of light); suddenly arose in her mind. Wild—uncontrollable.

L. 356. Favour—*i. e.*, a badge given by her to be worn as a mark of her favour to Lancelot. (It was an ancient custom for a knight to wear a token of the lady who favoured him, on his helmet. The token was sometimes a glove or a scarf or some such thing presented by the lady.)

Ll. 355—356. Suddenly flashed . . . at the tilt—suddenly she felt a desire to give a token to Lancelot, which he should wear at the tournament.

L. 357. She braved a riotous heart—she felt a tumult in her heart as she requested him; she felt greatly agitated when she was asking Lancelot to wear her favour. Braved—faced. Riotous—agitated; tumultuous.

L. 358. It—the name. [I am sure yours is a noble name]. Fair lord—‘Fair’ is merely a term of courtesy as ‘dear’ in ‘Dear Sir’. As those who know me etc.—those who know me are well aware of the fact that I do not wear any lady’s favour. [The reason was that Lancelot loved Guinevere, but could not wear his favour publicly].

L. 363. Wont—custom.

L. 364. Yea, so—indeed, if it is so.

L. 365. Lesser likelihood—less probability.

LI. 364—365. Yea, so . . . noble lord—if so, your identity will be better hidden if you wear my favour. [Lancelot never wore a lady’s token in a tourney, and so if now he wore it, nobody would be able to recognise him].

LI. 366—367. He turned . . . mind—mentally weighed the value of her suggestion.

L. 368. Found it true—found that what she said was quite right. My child—an address of affection.

L. 370. Sleeve—portion of the garment that covers the arm.

L. 371. Broidered—embroidered.

LI. 374—375. The blood . . . delight—she blushed with joy (to think that she had at last roused soft feelings in his heart). [Elaine was filled with delight to find that Lancelot was doing for her what he had not done for any lady before; this was the reason for her blush]. Left her all the paler—Blood left her face (owing to the anguish of the maiden’s heart, on the eve of her beloved’s departure) and made her look paler than before.

L. 377. Unblazoned—without any device; blank.

L. 378. His brother's—which belonged to Sir Torre.

L. 379. Parted with—gave.

L. 380. Grace—favour.

L. 381. In keeping—in your charge. To have my shield in keeping—to keep my shield.

L. 382. Squire—the literal meaning of the word is “shield-bearer” (from Lat. Scutum—a shield); [By keeping your shield, I become your squire]. Twice to day—you have done me two favours to day, one by agreeing to wear my token, and another, by asking me to keep your shield. b

Ll. 384—385. For fear ...earnest—lest you are seriously called lily maid because you are actually pale as a lily.

L. 385. Let me....back—let me warm you up (by my kisses).

L. 383. Once, twice etc.—*i. e.*, numbering the kisses.

L. 387. Sir Lancelot....hand—*i. e.*, kissed his own hand and by so doing showed his homage to Elaine. It was an ancient custom for strangers to kiss their own hand to show courtesy to a lady.

L. 388. Stayed—stopped.

L. 389. Made a sudden step—stepped suddenly towards the gate.

L. 390. Blown about—disordered by the wind around her face.

L. 391. Rosy-kindled—flushed to a rosy tint, as she was warmed up by her brother's kisses.

L. 392. Paused—stopped.

L. 393. Arms—weapons of Lancelot and Lavaine.

L. 395. Sparkle—glitter. Dipt—plunged. Downs—uplands. Dipt below the downs—they went down the uplands and vanished from the sight.

L. 396. So lived in phantasy—the phrase first occurring in line 27, is repeated here to take the reader back to the point whence the digression to explain how Elaine came by the shield began.

Paraphrase Ll. 355—395. Suddenly flashed on...
in fantasy—suddenly an irresistible longing over took her that Lancelot should put on her token at the tourney. There was a great flutter in her heart as she made the request. "Good lord," she said, "whose name I don't know, though I am sure the name is a noble one, rather the noblest. I believe, among mankind,—will you wear my favour at this tournament?" "No, fair lady," he answered, because I have never put on the favour of any woman in tournaments. This is my custom, as those who are acquainted with my ways, know. "It is so, is it,?" she replied, "well, then, if you put on my favour, naturally there will be less probability of your being recognised by your friends and acquaintances." And he weighed her suggestion carefully within him, and finding what she said was correct, said, "Right you are, my child, I'll wear your favour. Go and bring it to me, but what is it?" She told him that it was a sleeve embroidered with pearls and fetched it. Then he tied the sleeve on to his helmet and said smiling, 'I have never done so for any maiden before;' when she heard these words of Lancelot, she blushed with joy. But she soon turned pale at the thought of Lancelot's departure, when Lavaine came back with his brother's shield, which was without any device and gave it to Lancelot. Lancelot gave his own shield to Elaine and said, "Do me the favour of

keeping in custody this shield of mine till I return." She said, " You have offered me two favours during this day. Thus guarding the shield I may literally be called your squire!" At this Lavaine said with laugh " Lily maid you are called by our people ; lest you be really as pale as a lily as their epithet suggests, let me bring the rose back into your cheek by kissing you once, twice, three times. Now go to your bed." Having said so, he kissed her and Lancelot kissed his own hand (as a mark of affectionate respect to Elaine) ; and then they went off. She waited there for a minute more, and then all on a sudden went to the gate, when her hairs were blown about her sad face which was still rosy on account of her brother's kiss. Then she stopped by the gateway, standing silently near Lancelot's shield, and looked on at the arms of the retreating figures as they glittered in the distance, until they disappeared below the uplands. Then she went up her tower, kept the shield there and lived in the world of her fancy.

N. B. We notice in the passage that though Lancelot was a sinner, his heart was not so hardened as not to feel the pricks of his conscience. That is why he very often became gloomy in the midst of mirthful talk. We notice also his frank courteous, and affectionate nature which the poor girl misinterprets to be love.

Elaine is a simple innocent girl in love ; loving with all the ardour of pure passion, she imagines that she may win Lancelot's love by her subtle but innocent feminine advances, as she requests him to wear her favour. She has begun to suffer all the anguish and suspense of one in love.

Lavaine departs with a brotherly kiss on the cheeks of his sister and it appears from what we have

seen of him that he is a spirited young man who will follow Lancelot faithfully through thick and thin, as he admires him beyond measure.

Ll. 397—410. *Lancelot and Lavaine came to an old knight, who now lived like a hermit, and stayed overnight in his place, which was not far from Camelot.*

L. 397. The new companions—*i.e.*, Lancelot and Lavaine. Past—*i.e.*, passed : went.

L. 398. Backs—undulations in the surface of the high lands stretching long in front. Bushless downs—open barren uplands.

L. 401. Prayed, laboured and prayed—prayed and worked hard. His life was a life of prayer and hard work.

L. 402. Ever—always. Scooped himself—hollowed out for himself.

L. 403. Chapel—a small place of prayer.

L. 404. Massive—huge. Columns—pillars. Shorecliff cave—a cave cut out of a rock on the seashore.

L. 405. Chambers—rooms. Cells—small rooms.

Ll. 402—405. And ever labouring . . . chambers—by hard and constant toil, he had dug out in the white rock a chapel and a hall with huge pillars.

L. 405. Green light—the light was greenish, because it came from the green turf beneath.

L. 407. Struck up—shot upwards. Lived—was vividly seen. Milky roofs—white roofs [because the rocks are usually chalk-cliffs in these regions.]

Ll. 406—407. The green light roofs—a greenish light shot up from the green turfs and was seen vividly on the white roofs of the chanel.

L. 408. Tremulous—trembling, shaking. Aspens and Poplars—are varieties of trees.

L. 409. A noise of falling showers—the leaves trembling (in the wind) produced the sound of pouring rain.

L. 410 Wending—going. Bode—*i.e.*, abode: stayed.

Paraphrase II. 397—410. Mean while the new they bode—In the meantime the two new acquaintances travelled a long way over the undulations of the barren uplands and came to a place near Camelot, where, Lancelot knew, there lived a knight who for the last forty years had been leading the life of an ascetic devoted to prayer, and labour; by hard toil, he had made hollows in the white chalk-cliffs and made out of them a small closet for prayer, and a hall on huge pillars looking like a cave in a rock by the sea side, and several other small rooms. All these apartments were quite dry and decent looking. The green light thrown by the green turf below, shot upwards and was vividly seen on the milk-white roofs. And in the meadows below, the trembling leaves of aspen and poplar trees produced a sound like that of the falling rain. Reaching there they rested there for the night.

II. 411—425. *Lancelot revealed his identity to Lavaine and asked him to keep it secret. Lavaine was filled with amazement and reverence to learn it.*

L. 411. Broke from underground—the light of the morning seemed to appear from beneath the earth as the sun rose from below the horizon. When the next day underground—*i.e.*, the next morning.

L. 412. Red fire—the crimson rays of the morning sun. Shadows—the long shadows of objects obstructing the sunlight. Shot red fire....cave—threw into the cave the crimson rays of the rising sun and also the shadows of objects that intercepted the rays.

L. 413. Mass—the Sacrament of Lord's Supper performed in Roman Catholic Churches. Heard mass—heard the prayers, which the hermit said while celebrating mass. Broke fast—ate something.

L. 414. Hold my name hidden—do not disclose my name to anybody.

L. 415. Lancelot of the Lake—because Lancelot was carried away by a fairy when his parents, a king and a queen, were captured by their rebellious subjects. Her own country was surrounded by walls in the midst of the sea. She was hence called the Lady of the Lake, and her foster son called Lancelot of the Lake.

L. 416. Abashed—confused. Instant—instantaneous. Reverence—the spirit of reverence for noble things is a quality highly valued by Tennyson. This quality in one shows that his soul is filled with high idealism. Here reverence is said to be dearer to young men than their own praise. In another place, the poet values reverence even more than knowledge :

“Let knowledge grow from more to more
But more of reverence in us dwell.”

The value of reverence, of respect and admiration for noble things, is really inestimable for formation of character.

L. 417. Dearer to....praise—respect for great and noble things is a quality valued more by right and healthy minded young men than their own praise.

L. 418. But left him leave to stammer—His reverence for the great hero confused him to such an extent that he could only stammer out the three words ‘Is it indeed.’ Is it indeed—is it really so?

L. 419. Muttering—uttering in a low tone.

L. 420. He got his breath—he found words to speak; till now he was breathless in admiration of this famous hero. One, one have I seen—of the two greatest persons of the age (Arthur and Lancelot), I have seen one: that is, I have seen Lancelot, who is one of the two greatest men of the age.

L. 421. Liege-lord—feudal sovereign.

L. 422. Dread—awful. Pendragon—literally meaning a ‘dragon’s head,’—a title signifying a principal leader in war, given first not to Arthur, but to Uther, his father. Here of course the term is applied to Arthur, who was the son and heir of Uther. King of Kings—overlord : sovereign lord.

L. 423. Mysteriously—with mystery in connection with his birth. Of whom the people talk mysteriously—about whose origin, there are mysterious rumours in the country.

L. 424. There—*i.e.*, at Camelot.

L. 424—425. Then were I.....had seen—if I were at that instant struck blind, I might say that I had seen everything worth-seeing in this world ; I would not mind losing my sight, for I would have seen then the best things of the world.

Paraphrase Ll. 411—425. But when the next dayI had seen—But when the next morning came from below the earth, and the cave was filled with the crimson light (of the rising sun) and the shadows of objects that intercepted it, they got up, heard

prayer, ate something and rode off. Then Lancelot said to Lavaine, "Know my name, but keep it unrevealed, You are riding with Lancelot of the Lake." Lavaine was taken aback ; his respect and admiration for this great name,—reverence for great things being a quality more loved by all young men than even self-praise—confused him and he could only utter with halting accents, "Can it be so,"—and then he mumbled, "The Great Lancelot;" —and at last recovering his power of speech he said, "I have seen one great man, and when I have seen that other one—our great feudal overlord, that awful Arthur Pendragon, that supreme overlord of Britain, who is talked about mysteriously by people, and will be seen by me at Camelot,—if I were that instant suddenly struck blind, I might say that I had seen all that is worth seeing in this world."

N. B.—Lancelot reveals his name to Lavaine because he did not like to make a secret of it to a devoted friend and follower like Lavaine.

We find here Lavaines' reverence for great men and deeds, which is a powerful force for the formation of character. He has heard the great names of Arthur and Lancelot and revered them in his heart of hearts.

L. 426—442. *Lancelot and Lavaine reached Camelot and the latter looked with reverence and delight upon the godly form of Arthur, seated upon his magnificent throne.*

L. 426. *Lists—the enclosure of the tournament.*

L. 428. *Peopled gallery—the line of raised seats crowded with people who had come to witness the tournament. Let his eyes run....gallery—allowed his gaze to sweep over the crowded rows of seats ;*

looked round the gallery, which was crowded with spectators.

L. 429. Lay.....grass—the line of seats was arranged like a crescent moon on the meadow and looked like a rainbow on account of the variegated colours of the dress of the spectators.—particularly of the ladies.

L. 430. They—*i.e.*, the eyes of Lavaine. Clear-faced—of clear or fair complexion. The word is suggestive of Arthur's purity of heart that was reflected in his countenance.

L. 431. Robed—dressed. ✓ Samite—silk embroidered with gold or silver thread. Easily to be known—to be recognised without difficulty; to be easily distinguished.

L. 432. Clung—was attached. Golden dragon—there was a dragon made of gold on the crest of Arthur's crown. (A dragon is an imaginary animal—a fire-breathing winged snake).

L. 433. Writhed—twined round his dress. Down his robe etc.—the figure of the dragon, made of gold, encircled or twined his dress.

L. 434. Carven-work—frame decorated with carvings.

L. 435. Gilded—golden.

L. 435—436. Sloping....chair—from the back of the throne. The dragon heads came down to form the two arm-rests of the seat.

L. 436. Them—*i. e.*, the dragons.

L. 437. Loop—figure made by a curve. Knots—clusters. Folds—coils.

L. 438. Fled over through the wood-work—ran round and across the wooden frame work, so that owing to the curves and loops formed by them they seemed to be always in motion. Found—reached.

L. 439. The new design—the carvings other than those of the dragons just mentioned.

L. 439—440. Wherein they.....ease—these dragons merged themselves in the other decorative designs without any sudden or abrupt transition, the figures of the dragons smoothly dissolving in the other designs. Tender—delicate. [The workmanship was so fine and delicate that the different designs mingled with one another very smoothly, so as to form one harmonious whole].

L. 441. Canopy—the covering above the royal seat. Set—spread.

L. 442. Nameless king—the king (mentioned in line 45) whose name was not known. [The last and biggest of the diamonds which king Arthur had found in the glen of Lyonesse and for which the tournament was being held, was set upon the canopy and was shining with bright lustre].

Paraphrase Ll. 426—442: So spake Lavaine.... nameless king—Lavaine spoke in this manner, and when they arrived at the enclosure of the tournament in the field near Camelot, he allowed his gaze to travel through the long line of crowded seats, forming a crescent that looked like a rainbow upon the meadow. He then perceived the fair and noble king who sat dressed in rich gold embroidered silk, and could easily be recognised by the golden dragon figuring on his crown. And the dragon encircled his robe with its golden body. From the carved back of the chair behind the king two golden dragons,

again, glided downwards to form its arm-rests. And the remaining dragons in clusters, curves and very many coils, ran through the whole of the carvings till they reached the patterns other than those of the dragons ; and they softly merged themselves in them without a sudden break in the continuity of the design,—so delicate was the workmanship. And in the highly valuable canopy stretched over the head of Arthur, shone the finest (and biggest) diamond of the unknown King.

L. 443—453. *Lancelot modestly says that he is not so great as he is thought to be. When the contest begins, he joins the weaker side and acquires himself gloriously in the fight.*

L. 444. *Firmer seat*—*i. e.*, I sit more firmly on the horse than ordinary people. [Hence he is seldom thrown off his horse in a fight].

L. 445. *The truer lance*—my lance has a surer aim and effect than that of others.

L. 446. *Crescent*—growing; coming into prominence. *Come to all I am*—equal me in my glory and achievements. ‘That’ is understood after ‘all.’

L. 447. *Overcome*—outdo, defeat. [They will not only equal me but surpass me in every respect.] *Dwells*—lives.

L. 448. *Save*—except. *Far-off*—remote, distant.

L. 447—449. *Explanation.* And in me not great—unless it be a little greatness to understand that I am not great, I possess no other greatness. (Socrates said likewise : he was wise in this that he knew that he did not know anything).

L. 450. *There is the man*—there is the really great man,—referring to Arthur. *Gaped upon him*—

looked at him with his mouth open in wonder. [Lavaine looked with open mouth as though he was looking at something wonderful].

L. 451. Miraculous—mysteriously wonderful and strange.

L. 452. Either side—both sides of the combatants. Anon—soon.

L. 453. Assailed—attacked. Held the lists—defended the enclosure. [One party attacked and the other party remained on the defensive].

L. 454. Did set lance in rest—levelled their lance ready for charge. Did strike spur—spurred on their horses. In the midst—in the centre of the field.

L. 455. Shock—did shock,—connected with ‘did’ in l. 452. There so furiously shock—there the combatants rushed against one another with such a tremendous force.

L. 457. If any....afield—if any one on that day who had nothing do with the tournament, had been on the field there for some other purpose. [That is, no one was on the field except the combatants].

L. 458. The hard....arms—it would seem to him that the solid earth trembled in consequence of the rush of the two sides, and the clash of arms would have appeared to him as terrible as of a thunderstroke.

L. 459. Bode—waited.

L. 460. Hurled—threw himself.

L. 461. Little need to speak—it is needless to say anything about Lancelot’s heroism and glory.

L. 462. In his glory—in his wonderful action; at his best.

L. 463. Smote—struck. Overthrew—defeated.

Paraphrase Ll. 443—463. Then Lancelot answered . . . he overthrew—Then Lancelot replied to young Lavaine, “ You call me a great man ; of course I have got a firmer seat on horseback and I wield a surer lance than an ordinary person, but there are many young men of great promise who will attain the skill or glory I possess and at last beat it. There is no greatness in me, except it be a remote streak of greatness to be thoroughly aware that I am not really great. Look there at King Arthur—he is the great man.” And Lavaine looked at him as on something supernatural with his mouth open in wonder. Soon the trumpets sounded. Then both the sides those that attacked, and those that defended the enclosure levelled their lances, spurred their horses, rushed all at once, clashed against each other in the middle so terribly that a person at a distance might quite see—if any person other than the contestants could be found on the field that day—the rigid earth trembling, and hear a sound like that of low thunder, because of the clash of arms. Lancelot waited a little till he found out which was the weaker side ; then he threw himself among the weaker side against the more powerful one. Much need not be said about Lancelot’s splendid charge. King, duke, earl or baron,—whomsoever he struck, he threw down from the horse.

N. B. Lancelot is conscious of his own limitations and of his inferiority to Arthur, and he is magnanimous in confessing his smallness, as well as in joining the weaker side against the stronger in the contest. This also shows his courage and his confidence that he would give victory to the weaker side by his valour.

Ll. 464—483. *Lancelot's kith and kin, enraged by a stranger knight rivalling Lancelot in glory attacked him angrily all in a body.*

L. 464. Kith and kin—relations.

L. 465. Ranged—arranged. The Table Round that held the lists—the knights of the Round Table were defending the field, against those who attacked. Ranged with the Table Round—defending the ground with the knights of the Round Table.

L. 466. Wrathful—angry. They were filled with indignation to think that an unknown knight should surpass Lancelot.

L. 467. Overdo—excel, Almost should overdo the deeds of Lancelot—should exhibit almost greater valour than Lancelot, their kinsman, who was till then known the best of fighters. Should do and almost.....Lancelot—should not only perform but also excel the achievements of Lancelot.

L. 468. Lo—behold.

L. 469. Mean—refer to. Force—physical power.

L. 470. Grace—charm; elegance. Versatility—all round accomplishments.

L. 473. Not such his wont—that is not his custom. That—who.

L. 474. How then?—How is it then possible? Fury—anger. A fury seized.....all—They were terribly wrathful.

L. 475. Fiery family passion—burning zeal felt by a member of a family for the honour of another member of the same family.

L. 476. A glory one with theirs—a reputation (of Lancelot) which they shared with him as being members of the same family. [The relations of

Lancelot felt indignant because a stranger by excelling Lancelot, was eclipsing the glory and honour of their family.]

L. 477. Couched their spears—levelled their spears. Pricked their steels—spurred their horses.

L. 478. Plumes—*i.e.*, plumes that decorated their crests. Wind—*i.e.*, wind that struck against them as they made a rush. There plumes....wind—the decorative feathers of their helmet were blown backwards by the wind as they rushed forward.

L. 480. Bare—old form of “bore.” North-sea—it is known to be very rough. So a ‘wild wave’ of the North-sea must be very rough and boisterous.

L. 481. Summit—the top or crest of the wave. Green-glimmering towards the summit—with a tinge of green just beneath the foamy white crest. (Stormy waves are tinted green between the dark blue of their lower part and the foamy white of their top.) Bears—its nominative is ‘wave’ in l. 480, and connected with ‘down’ in l. 483.

L. 482. Stormy crests—tops of the waves tossed by storm.

L. 482. That smoke—that throw flying flakes of foam looking like smoke rising up to the sky. [‘That refers to ‘crests,’ and ‘smoke’ is used as a verb here].

L. 483. Down—connected with ‘bears’ in l. 481. The phrase, ‘bears down on’ means ‘swoops upon.’ Bark—ship. Over-bears—overpowers.

L. 484. Him that helms it—the person that is guiding the ship.

Explanation Ll. 479—485. All together down.... his charger—The relatives of Lancelot in a body rushed upon him like a tempestuous wave in the

vast North-sea,—a wave that has got a zone of shining green near its crest—which swoops on a ship with its flying sprays of foam that look like smoke blowing into the sky, and over-whelms the ship and the helmsman. Similarly they bore down Lancelot and his horse by force.

N. B.—The accurate observation of the rough sea as shown by the alliterative compound “green-glimmering” is noticeable.

L. 486. Charger—war-horse. Down-glancing—sliding downwards after striking the shield. Lamed the charger—made his horse lame.

L. 487. Cuirass—breast-plate. The head—of the spear.

L. 488. Snapt—broke, (from ‘snap’). And remained—and remained fixed there,

Paraphrase Ll. 464—488. But in the field.... and remained—But in the field Lancelot’s relations that belonged to the brotherhood of the Round Table and who were defending the enclosure,—all strong men—were angry that an unknown knight should perform and almost excel the doings of Lancelot. And one said to another, “what is his name ? I don’t refer to his prowess alone,—his ease, elegance and many-sided accomplishments are also remarkable ! Is it not Lancelot himself ? ‘ Whenever has Lancelot put on the token of devotion to a lady in the tournaments ? ’ —was the reply, ‘ that is not his way, as we who are intimately acquainted with him, know full well.’ ”

‘ How can it be then possible ? Who can the person be ? ’ They were all filled with great anger—a frenzied zeal to uphold the reputation of Lancelot whose glory they shared as his relatives. They

levelled their spears, spurred their horse, and thus their plumes were thrust backwards by the wind striking against them as they rushed. They throw themselves upon him in a body like a tempestuous wave of the extensive North-sea that has a tint of green in its upper part, and tempest-tossed, throws flying flakes of foam at the sky; this fierce wave swoops upon a ship and overwhelms it and the helmsman, similarly they overwhelmed Sir Lancelot and his horse, and a spear sliding downward struck the horse lame, and another lance pierced through his own breast plate and the point of it entered into his side, broke, and was fixed there.

Ll. 489—505. *It is due to Lancelot's courage and heroism that his side wins, and he is declared the winner of the prize. He however feels he is mortally wounded and hurries away from the field.*

L. 489. Worshipfully--nobly.

L. 490. Bore....earth—unhorsed a knight of old fame.

L. 491. Where he lay—*i.e.*, the place where he lay wounded.

L. 492. Sweating—perspiring. He up....got—he mounted the horse, perspiring and with great pain.

L. 493. Do—fight on. Endure—live. [Lancelot resolved to fight as long as he could do so].

L. 494. Lustily holpen—vigorously helped. [The story is of olden times; hence to give an antique flavour to the narrative, Tennyson used many old English forms, *e.g.*, holpen, bare, drive etc.]. By the rest—by the knights, whose side he had joined.

L. 495. Half miracle—half-supernatural occurrence. Seemed half-miracle—it almost seemed miraculous to his own party that he could succeed in beating back all the knights of the Round Table.

L. 496. Drave—drove.

L. 497. All the Table Round—all the knights of the Round Table who were defending the field.

L. 498. Barrier—to the palisade or fence enclosing the field. Trumpets blew—to announce the prize.

L. 499. Proclaiming—declaring. Who wore.... scarlet—*i.e.*, Lancelot who wore Elaine's favour. [It was announced that the prize went to the knight who wore the scarlet sleeve].

L. 502. Diamond....diamonds—Don't talk to me of diamonds now; similarly, *prize me no prizes*, means 'do not talk to me of prizes.'

L. 503. For God's love—an exclamation of impatience. A little air—allow me to breathe freely.

L. 504. My prize is death—all that I have gained from this tournament is death.

L. 505. Hence will I—I shall go away from this place. Charge—command.

Paraphrase Ll. 489—505. Sir Lavaine then acted well and nobly: he overthrew a knight of old renown and took his horse to Lancelot where he had fallen. He clambered up the side of the horse perspiring with pain but determined to fight on as long as he lived, and being vigorously helped by the rest of his party—and it seemed to them almost a supernatural event—drove his relations and all the other knights of the Round Table that defended the enclosure right up to the palisade. Then the

trumpets sounded to announce the prize to be his who wore the red sleeve set with pearls. All the knights of his (Lancelot's) side cried, "Go forward and have your reward—the diamond." But he replied, 'Don't talk to me of diamonds now; for God's sake, give me a little air. Don't talk to me of prizes, for the prize I am shortly going to receive is death. I'll get away hence and I ask you not to pursue me.'

Ll. 506—522. *Lancelot rode away to a poplar-grove and got the spear-point drawn out by Lavaine. Then the hermit came, took him to his cell and dressed his wound. He lay there for long, wavering between life and death.*

L. 506. Vanished—hurried away.

L. 507. Poplar grove—a grove or arbour of poplar trees.

L. 508. Glid—glided down.

L. 509. Gasping—breathing with open mouth with great difficulty.

L. 510. Draw the lance-head—draw out the spear-head, which is lying fixed in my side.

L. 511. I dread me—I am afraid; 'me' is reflexive. Dative—as in 'He sat him down.'

L. 512. But he—but he said. I die . . . it—I am almost dying with the pain of the lance-head thrust into my body.

L. 514. Marvellous—terrible. Shriek—loud cry of agony. Ghastly from—fearful sound of pain. Ghastly—terrible.

L. 515. Burst forth—oozed out, rushed out. [A large quantity of blood came out of the wound, as the spear-head was taken out].

L. 516. For pure pain—on account of sheer agony; only on account of pain. Swooned away—fainted: lost his consciousness.

L. 517. The hermit—the hermit referred to in l. 401. Bare—*i.e.*, bore.

L. 518. Stanchéd—checked the flow of blood from the wound.

L. 518—519. In daily....die—in daily suspense whether he was going to die or survive. (His condition was so bad that it was doubtful whether he would live or die).

L. 520. Hid....rumour—away from the people talking about him. By—near.

L. 522. He lay—he lay there. [Connected with 'there' in line 518].

L. 521—522. Tennyson very often employs the trick of repeating sweet-sounding and picturesque phrases and lines to emphasise the beauty of the thing described upon his readers. These lines are almost a repetition of ll. 408—409.

Paraphrase Ll. 506—522. Having said so he suddenly disappeared from the field with Lavaine into that forest of poplars. There he got down from his horse, and sat, and breathing with difficulty said to Lavaine, 'Draw out the spear point.' Lavaine replied, 'Oh my dear Sir Lancelot, I am afraid you will expire if I pull it out. But he said, "I almost die with pain—draw it out please, at once," and Sir Lavaine drew it out. Sir Lancelot gave out a terrible scream and cry of agony and almost half the blood of his body oozed out; he fell down upon the ground on account of sheer pain and fainted away. Then that ascetic knight came out of his cell, and carried him in and there checked the flow of blood from the

wound. And there he remained for many weeks hovering between life and death, away from the busy talk of people about him; thus he lay by the forest of poplars, which was resonant with the rustle of leaves of aspen trees that heard like the sound of falling rain.

L. 523—545. *The king commands Sir Gaius to find the stranger knight and give the diamond to him.*

L. 523. Fled the lists—*i. e.*, fled from the lists.

L. 524. His party—the party on whose behalf he fought. Of utmost North and West—belonging to the farthest North and West of England.

L. 525. Waste—barren. Marches—frontiers; border lands; they were barren because they were the fighting grounds of contending neighbours, and so nobody cared to cultivate them. Desolate—lonely.

L. 527. Won the day—gained the victory.

L. 528. Sore wounded—badly wounded; severely wounded.

L. 529. His prize untaken—without taking his prize. Crying that his prize is death—exclaiming that he would shortly die.

L. 530. Hinder—forbid.

L. 532. He seemed.....Lancelot—This is an instance of what is called Sophoclean irony. A character in the drama says something the full significance of which is not so well-known to himself as to the audience. Sophocles the great Greek tragedian employed this trick with great power in his dramas. Hence it is called 'Sophoclean irony.' Another Lancelot—a second Lancelot.

L. 533. Twenty times I thought him etc.—The knight was fighting with such courage and heroism that I thought, and thought many times that he must be Lancelot.

L. 534. Pass—go out of sight. Uncared for—unnoticed and unhonoured. Wherefore—consequently. Rise—get up.

L. 535. Gawain—a Knight of the Round Table.

L. 535. Needs—necessarily. Near—close to this place. [As he is tired and wounded he cannot go far from this place].

L. 537. Charge—command; assign this duty to you. Get at once to horse—start immediately on horse-back.

L. 538. Breathes—lives.

L. 539. Deem—consider. Rashly—indiscriminately; indiscreetly. Will deem....given—will consider that this prize has been awarded without proper judgment.

L. 540. Prowess—valour. Wondrous—amazing. No customary honour—unusual honour.

L. 541. Customary—as is enjoined by custom.

L. 540—541. We will do.....honour—we will not render unto him merely such honour as is enjoined by custom *i.e.*, we will do even something more: as he has not come to take the prize (as the custom is) we will send the prize after him.

L. 542. Of us to claim the prize—to demand the prize from us.

L. 543. After—*i.e.*, after him. Rise—get up.

L. 545. Bring us—*i.e.*, bring us the report as to where he is and how he is doing. Fares—is doing.

L. 546. Cease—stop. Quest—search. [Do not give up your search till you find him].

Paraphrase Ll. 523—546. But that day when Lancelot ran away from the field, the knights belong-

ing to the far North and West of England, who formed his party—they were the lords of the barren borderlands and lonely regions—approached the great Arthur and said to him, “Oh Sir, our knight, by whose help we have gained the victory, has departed severely wounded, without accepting his prize. He said that the prize that lay in store for him was death.” “Heaven forbid,” said the king, “that so noble a knight as we saw this day must not go out of sight without being taken care of;—he appeared to be a second Lancelot,—nay twenty times I took him for Lancelot himself! Therefore, go Sir Gawaine, ride out to find the knight, as wounded and tired he naturally will be somewhere close to this place. I command you immediately to mount your horse. And O knights and kings, I am sure there is no one amongst you, who holds that this our prize was given without proper judgment and discrimination. His valour was indeed marvellous. We will render unto him no honour of the ordinary sort. As the knight did not come to claim his prize, we will ourselves send it to him. Go, take this diamond and give it to him and bring us the news as to where he is and how he is doing; and don’t give up your search till’ you meet him.

N. B.—The passage shows the eagerness of the king to do justice and to encourage and patronise a really great hero. This was the quality that made the king’s reputation,—namely that he was just and impartial and did all that he could to find out the real heroes from among his contemporary warriors. He raised and honoured them, inspired them with lofty ideals and tried to draw out the best that was in them. King Arthur was not only a great man himself: he was a maker of great men.

L. 547—560. *Sir Gaiaen reluctantly starts with the diamond in quest of the unknown knight.*

L. 547. Carven flower—a flower carved on the canopy above.

L. 548. Restless heart—a glittering centre. The diamond was sparkling in the centre of the carved flower in the canopy, hence it is called the 'restless heart' of the flower.

L. 550. At Arthur's right—Sir Gawain occupied a high position in the court, for he sat at Arthur's right.

L. 551. Frowning—displeased, angry, (because he was unwilling to leave 'the banquet and concourse of knights and kings.' See l. 559—60). With a smiling face etc.—though he was angry at heart, he concealed his feeling under a smiling appearance.

L. 552. Mid—*i. e.*, middle Might—strength. Flourish—vigour. May—youthful life; the month of May is the delightful season of spring in the western countries. In the.....May—at the height of his youthful strength and vigour.

L. 553. Surnamed—having the title of.

L. 554. After—next to. Tristram and others—all these are knights of the Round Table.

L. 555. Therewithal—also, besides.

L. 556. Sir Mordred—a nephew of Arthur who proved a traitor. He aspired to Arthur's throne and occupied it in Arthur's absence. Arthur eventually killed and was mortally wounded by him. The suggestion is that Gawain being Mordred's brother could not but have a touch of disloyalty in him, though Gareth, another brother to Mordred was a very dutiful and loyal knight. Lot—the father of Mordred, Gawain, and Gareth. Lot was a "traitor"

to the king" ; and "fought against him in the Barons' wars."

L. 557. **Loyal**—true. **Nor often loyal**—sometimes disloyal and unfaithful.

L. 558. **Wroth**—angry. **Sally forth**—start; go forth.

L. 559. **In quest of whom etc.**—in search of the stranger knight.

L. 560. **Banquet**—great feast. **Concourse**—assemblage, company. [Sir Gawain was very angry because he had to go forth in search of a strange knight, while there would be feasts and rejoicings in the court].

Paraphrase Ll. 547—560. Having thus spoken he took the diamond, which was sparkling at the centre of the carved flower in the canopy, and gave it to him. Then from a seat on Arthur's right rose Gawaine with a smiling countenance but angry heart—a prince, who, was at the height of his youthful vigour,—one having the title of 'The Courteous'—beautiful and strong and next to Lancelot, Tristram, Geraint and Gareth; he was a great knight, but a brother to Sir Mordred and a son of Lot, and consequently not often a man of word. He was now angry at the king's order because he would have to start forth in search of a strange knight leaving the pleasures of the great feast in the hall and the assemblage of knights and princes.

N. B.—Sir Gawain is introduced as a man "not often loyal to his word,"—and is represented as an insincere man who goes to his duty "with a smiling face and a frowning heart." He was fond of pleasures and cared more for a banquet and concourse of princes than for his duty to the king.

L. 561—585. *The King comes back to the queen and learns from her that Lancelot fought incognito for greater glory.*

L. 562. To the banquet—*i.e.*, passed to the banquet or feast. Dark—gloomy. Dark in mood—gloomily. [Arthur was filled with sorrow to think that the unknown knight might be Lancelot after all and that since he was severely wounded, he might die].

L. 563. Past—passed (a verb).

L. 564. Despite—inspite of. Spake—spoke. Gain—achievement. All for gain of glory—wholly prompted by the desire to win glory.

L. 565. Wound to wound—a fresh wound to the previous wound he had talked about to me. [Thus for the sake of glory, he did not heed his wound but came to the contest, and then received another wound of a fatal nature].

L. 567. Tarriance—waiting ; delay. [It is a noun coined from the verb, 'tarry,' meaning 'wait.']}

L. 570. Then the queen amazed—supply the verb 'said ;' the queen was astonished at the question of the king and said.

L. 571. Won he not—Did he not win ? The queen was confident that Lancelot must have won the prize.

L. 572. That like was he—that person, who, you say, was like Lancelot, was Lancelot himself.

L. 575. Common talk—general rumour.

L. 576. At a touch—at the mere touch of his spear.

L. 577. But—only. His great name conquered—*i.e.*, the dread of his reputation secured him the victory.

L. 578. Would be hide—he liked to hide.

L. 579. To this end—with this object in view.

L. 580. Pretext—pretence Hindering wound—a wound keeping him back from the tournament.

L. 581. Jousts—used as a verb ; enter into the tournament.

L. 582. Were in aught decayed—were in any way impaired.

L. 584. Allow—excuse. *N.B.*—The queen hides that it was she who suggested these words to Lancelot and she passes these words as Lancelot's own.

Ll. 583—585. Our true Arthurglory—Arthur, a passionate lover of truth, might be angry at this false pretence of Lancelot: but when he hears that the pretence is made only for the sake of greater glory, he will excuse it.

Paraphrase Ll. 581—585. So all in wrath.....purer glory—So angrily he mounted his horse and went away. And Arthur gloomily went to the feast thinking whether it was indeed Lancelot who had come inspite of his wound for the purpose of winning glory and adding fresh wounds, had left the field on his horse only to die. The king feared thus and after waiting there for two days came back. When he met the queen he folded her in his arms and said “Are you still very ill my love ?” “No my lord”—she replied, and Arthur then asked her where Lancelot was. Then the queen said in amazement,—“was he not where you were ? Didn't he win the prize in the tourney ?” Arthur said that not he but one like him had won it. “Why the man, who, you say, was like Lancelot, was none but Lancelot himself ” said the queen. And as the king wanted to know how she came to learn that,

she said, "My lord, as soon as you had left us Lancelot referred to a general rumour that his antagonists succumbed to his spear-thrust simply because they got unnerved when they knew they were fighting against Lancelot; it was his reputation that was responsible for his victory. And so he would conceal his identity, from all, even from Arthur himself; and with this object he pretended to have a wound that prevented him from going to the joust so that he might fight unknown there, and test whether his old strength had deteriorated in any way. He added further, 'Arthur the great lovers of truth, when he hears (why I fought unknown) will excuse my pretence which is made for acquiring greater glory.'

N. B.—We notice Arthur's fondness for Lancelot and also his frankness to the queen. She, however, is insincere to her lord and tells him a lie when she explains the reason of Lancelot fighting unknown. We notice also her cleverness and brazen-faced effrontery; she does not feel at all abashed when she tells a lie to her husband.

Ll. 585—602. *The King regrets that Lancelot did not trust him with his secret. Though he is wounded, yet Arthur is glad that he has loved some maiden, for he was wearing a sleeve in the tournament.*

L. 586. Lovelier—more becoming. Had it been— it would have been.

L. 587. In lieu of—instead of. Idly—lightly; privolously. Dallying with—trifling with, playing with.

Ll. 586—588. Far lovelier.... trusted thee— Arthur was somewhat piqued when he heard that Lancelot had deceived him. He said that it would have been more becoming of Lancelot if he had not

trifled with truth and had trusted me as he had trusted the queen.

L. 589. Friend—Arthur calls himself Lancelot's friend, and so in not trusting him, he has failed in his friend's duty.

L. 591. Abeit—although. Fantastical—whimsical. [Arthur refers to the romantic caprices of his knights.]

L. 592. Fine—delicate. Large—large-souled ; noble.

L. 592—593. So fine . . . laughter—so delicate a misgiving in our noble Lancelot that per chance it is his name, and not his prowess, that gives him victory in fight, would naturally have made me laugh.

L. 594. But—only. But little cause for laughter—there is no ground for laughter. Lancelot's behaviour might very well move me to laughter ; but he is severely wounded in the tournament and may be dying at this moment.

L. 595. The construction of the line is:—O my queen, this is ill news for all who love him.

L. 596. Set upon him—attacked him.

L. 598. Goodly—adj. good. Goodly hopes are mine—I have sufficient reason to believe.

L. 599. Lancelot is no more a lovely heart—Lancelot has loved somebody, he has at last some woman to care for, so that he will not feel any more the solitude of a single life. [Arthur obviously feels that Lancelot has fallen in love with the lady, whose favour he was wearing at the tournament].

L. 600. Wont—custom. Against his wont—Lancelot never wore any lady's token at the tournament, for he loved the queen.

Paraphrase Ll 585—602. Then the king answered, "It were much fairer on the part of Lancelot if instead of lightly playing with truth he had put faith in me as he has in you. Surely his and king and most intimate friend could well, keep his secret. I know that my knights have romantic whims and caprices; nevertheless, such a delicate fear in our large-hearted Lancelot would naturally excite my laughter. But now remains no cause for mirth. His own relations, my queen,—and this is bad news for all who care for him—without recognising him charged him in fight, and as a result he left the field badly wounded. Still there is a piece of good news too, for I have fair hopes that Lancelot does not pass any more a lonesome life. He put on, as is not his custom, upon his helmet a red sleeve embroidered with pearls—it must be a present from some good girl.

N. B.—The king loves Lancelot, and so he is very sorry that Lancelot did not trust him, and again like a good friend he is happy at the thought that Lancelot has possibly at last a woman to love because this would make him feel less lonely.

Ll. 602—610. *The queen becomes almost made with jealousy and anger when she hears that Lancelot is in love with another woman.*

L. 603. Thy hopes are mine—I also hope like you. (The queen feels a shock as she hears Lancelot loves somebody else. but tries to keep up appearances). Choked—Her voice failed as a result of her strong feeling. [She was so overwhelmed by the news of Lancelot's love for a 'gentle maiden' that she could not speak].

L. 604. Sharply—quickly. To hide her face—i.e., not to betray any change of expression in her countenance.

L. 605. Past—passed ; went. Flung—threw.

L. 606. Writhed—rolled on it and suffered great mental torture.

L. 607. Clenched—tightly closed. Till they bit the palm—till the nails of the fingers made impressure on the flesh of the palm.

L. 608. Shrieked—cried out in her shrill faminine voice. Traitor—a faithless man. [She called Lancelot a faithless man, because she supposed he loved another woman.] And shrieked....wall—she uttered the word traitor in reproach to Lancelot (as he loved, she supposed, another woman); but she seemed, as it were, to address the deaf walls of the room as no name was uttered and no body was present there. Unhearing—deaf ; the inanimate wall that could not here.

L. 609. Flashed—burst. Wild tears—unrestrained tears, uncontrollable sobs. Rose again—when she regained control of herself, she got up.

L. 610. Proud and pale—proud, because she was determined not to appear hurt by the faithlessness of Lancelot, and pale on account of her mental anguish.

Paraphrase Ll. 602—610. "Oh" my lord, "He said, I also hope that he has loved a maiden." But then her voice failed her in emotion, and she quickly turned back so as not to allow her face to be seen by Arthur. She then went to her room and threw herself on the king's sofa and rolled in anguish upon it : in her passion she so tightly closed her fingers on the palm that the nails almost cut through it. She became almost mad with jealousy and anger, and cried out aloud 'Traitor'—to the deaf walls of the room. Then she burst into passionate tears, and after sometime rose and walked palely about the royal mansions, reserved and self-contained.

N. B.—In the first heat of passion the queen loses self-control and behaves as any other woman would in the circumstances. But later her pride helps her to regain her composure in some measure. We understand from her behaviour how passionately the queen loves Lancelot.

Ll. 611—700. *Gawain vainly looking for 'the unknown knight' comes to the Castle of Astolat and is requested by its master to stay there. Tempted by the beauty of Elaine, Gaicaine agrees to stay. Elaine soon gets offended by the subtle advances made by Gaicain for her love, and suggests that he should look at the unknown hero's shield to find out his identity. Gaicain recognises Lancelot's shield, but tries to turn Elaine's love from Lancelot by hinting at his love for the queen, but Elaine resents his allegations till at last Gaicaine leaves her the prize diamond to be given over to Lancelot by her, and leaves for the court.*

L. 611. The while—in the meanwhile. Through . . . round—through the entire surrounding country.

L. 612. Wearied of the quest—tired of the search. Gawain scoured the surrounding region but did not get any trace of Lancelot. He at last got tired of this vain search.

L. 613. Touched at all points—visited all places. Except the poplar grove—i.e., except that one place, where Lancelot was.

L. 615. Quamedelled—glossy, shining.

N. B.—'glittering' qualifies 'whom:' and 'whom' is obj. case and governed by the preposition 'at' in the next line. Glittering. . . . arms—wearing a bright armour. Whom glittering. . . . glanced at—Elaine looked at Gawain who was putting on a bright and shining armour.

L. 617. What of the knight—what news about the knight?

L. 619. Whereat—at hearing which. Caught—suspended. Caught her breath—stopped breathing for a while.

L. 620. Throughgo—she felt a thrust of the lance as it were on her own side in sympathy for Lancelot whom she loved; when she heard of the wound of Lancelot. She felt an acute pain, as though the lance pierced her own side.

L. 621. Smote—struck one hand against the other in anguish. Wellnigh—nearly. Swooned—fainted.

L. 622. Wonderingly—in amazement.

L. 625. Bore—carried.

L. 626. Random—aimless. Ridden a random round—rode desultorily, rode without any aim or destination. [Note the alliteration in the line the repetition of the 'and' sound.]

L. 628. Bide—stay.

L. 629. At random—aimlessly.

L. 630. Here was the knight—the knight, whom you are searching, stayed here for a while.

L. 631. Send or come for—*i.e.*, send for or come for; he will send somebody to take this shield or come personally to take it. Further more—besides; moreover.

L. 632. Anon—presently.

L. 633. Needs must we hear—we must necessarily hear from them soon, as our son must intimate to us his whereabouts before long.

Paraphrase Ll. 611—633. In the meanwhile Gawain with the diamond through all the tract around got tired of his search, but visited all spots except the poplar forest, and at last reached Astolat late in the day. Seeing him clad in shining armour the maiden Elaine asked him, "Do you know anything about the tournament of Camelot, Sir? How fared there the knight wearing a red sleeve on the helmet?" "He was the victor" was the reply. "I thought as much"—was the girl's rejoinder. "But he left the tournament wounded in his side," said Gawain. At this she stopped breathing for a while and felt as if the lance that struck Lancelot was piercing her own side too. She struck her hands together and almost fainted there. The Lord of Astolat came as Gawain was looking at her with amazement. Gawain informed him who he was, and on what errand he had been sent. He explained that he was carrying with him the prize of the tournament but could not find out its winner though he had been riding about aimlessly in his quest. He was in fact tired of the search. Hearing this the Lord of Astolat said to him "stay with us, and don't ride about aimlessly. The knight you seek came here and left a shield for which he will either come personally or send somebody. Besides, our son accompanies him. We shall soon hear from them—there is no doubt about it."

L. 634 Accorded—agreed. Wonted—usual; accustomed. Accorded... courtesy—agreed to stay there with his usual courtesy.

L. 635. Courtesy ... it—though courteous, he had a streak of treachery in him; his courtesy was not frank and sincere, but was tainted with treachery. [He agreed to stay, not merely to oblige the Baron, but to capture the heart of the fair Elaine if possible.]

In his heart of hearts, he entertained the treacherous design of winning the affection of Elaine. This was the way in which he meant to repay the hospitality of the Baron].

L. 636. Cast her eyes on—looked at her with an evil intention.

L. 637. Dainier—more beautiful ; more lovely ; sweeter.

L. 639. Exquisitely turned—beautifully shaped.

Ll. 637—639. Her shape... exquisitely turned—Gawaine looked at Elaine from head to foot and then again from her foot to head, and he noticed with amazement and admiration that her shape was faultless in every minute detail.

L. 640. This wild . . . me—the construction is “this wild flower should be for me; *i.e.*, if I stay, I shall have her for myself.” Wild flower—Glaine is called “a wild flower” as distinguished from the trim ladies of high society : Elaine lives in the country and is simple and fresh, as distinguished from the court-ladies who are conventional and sophisticated. Yew—a kind of evergreen tree.

L. 641. Oft they met—*i.e.*, Gawain and Elaine met often in the garden.

L. 642. Set himself to—engage himself in. To play upon her—to practise his tricks on her. [The tricks are emmerated below].

L. 643. Sallying wit—outbursts of wit ; rambling clever talk. Free flashes from a height above her—unconventional remarks and speeches that showed that he was conscious of his superiority to her. From a height above her—from a higher or superior position : *i.e.*, he talked freely with her in a manner that showed that his rank was superior to hers.

L. 644. Graces—accomplishments. Graces of the court—courtly refinements, the etiquettes and conventions of the court.

L. 645. Golden eloquence—fluent and attractive talk.

L. 646. Amorous—full of gallantry. Adulation—flattery. Amorous adulation—such flattery as is made by a lover. Till the maid....it—till she was too provoked enough to keep her lips shut any more. Rebelled against it—could not tolerate it.

L. 648. Loyal—Elaine cleverly gives Gawain this epithet to induce him to be loyal.

L. 650. Whence—from which shield. Slight—do not pay due respect to. [Elaine was offended by the undesirable attentions of Gawain, and administered a mild rebuke to her, ‘why do you waste your time with me ; said Elaine,’ instead of seeking the strange knight? Why don’t you come and see the shield, which will help you to know his name].

L. 651. Lose—give up. He sent you on—i.e., on which he sent you ; in which he employed you.

L. 652. Falcon—a bird of prey, which is trained to catch birds.

L. 653. Hern—shortened form of ‘heron’ a kind of bird. Slipt her at—let her loose to catch. Went to all the winds—went about aimlessly in all directions.

Explanation. Why prove no surer than our falcon etc....all the winds—why don’t you show yourself more trustworthy than our falcon that we let loose yesterday to catch a heron which it could not capture, and flew aimlessly hither and thither.

Paraphrase Ll. 633—654. The courteous Prince agreed to this with his customary politeness but his politeness was not frank but was tinged with treachery; but he remained Astolat at the request of the Baron. He looked on beautiful Elaine,—and where could be seen a prettier damsels?—he examined her beautiful figure from head to foot and again from foot to head—all so delicately formed, and said to himself, ‘Well if I stay, I should capture this beauty of the country-side.’ And often they met arogyony the yew trees in the garden and there he tried to win her favour by his lively wit, and superior and polished talk, by his courtly culture, by his songs, subdued smiles and sighs as of a lover and by attractive discourse and such flattery as one makes to his lady love. At last Elaine lost control of herself and spoke out “Prince, O dutiful nephew of our great king why don’t you want to examine the shield which that unknown knight has left and by which you might know his name? Why do you disrespect your king and give up the search on which he has sent you and show yourself no more trustworthy than our falcon that we let loose yesterday at a heron which it could not catch and wandered aimlessly in the air?”

L. 654. By mine head—he swore by his own head; it is only an oath.

L. 655. It—the quest. Lark—a kind of singing bird.

L. 655—656. Explanation. I loose it....eyes—As we lose sight of a lark in the blue sky as it recedes farther and farther into distance, so I lose the trail of my quest as my gaze is captured by the light of your blue eyes.

L. 657. An—if. An ye will it—if you so desire. The line is equivalent to ‘will you let me see the shield.’

L. 659. Azure—blue. Crowned—crested. [The device on Lancelot's shield was a lion painted in blue with golden names.]

L. 660. Ramp—rampant *i.e.*, in the posture of an attacking beast balancing on the hind legs. Field—the surface of the shield. Smote—struck (in surprise). Mocked—made a sarcastic remark.

L. 661. Right was the king—Arthur was right indeed when he had said that the unknown Knight was none but Lancelot. True—faithful; (said in sarcasm, perhaps referring to the amour between the queen and Lancelot). Some explain 'true' as 'loyal'. But then where is the touch of mockery in his statement?

Ll. 664—666. Gawain means by these lines as follows:—

You dreamt that Lancelot was the greatest of all Knights in the world,—and supposing I dreamt, *i.e.*, imagined that you loved Lancelot, it is you who can say whether you really love him. I beg your pardon for saying all this to you. But since I have already spoken out, will you please tell me plainly whether I shall be loving you in vain, or whether there is a hope you will return my love.

L. 667. Full—absolutely. Simple—frank.

L. 668. All my fellowship—my only company. [My brothers have been my only companions so far].

L. 670. My mother—because my mother could tell me what true love was.

L. 671. Mescemed—it seemed to me. So myself—just as my brothers do not know what true love is, so I also do not know anything about love.

Li. 669—671. Explanation Li. 669—672. And I, when often they have true love is—when my brothers discussed the subject of love, I wished my mother were there to lead the discussion ; my mother who had experiences of all phrases of life could inform us of the real nature of love. But my brothers were never themselves in love and so they talked on a subject of which they were entirely ignorant. So I don't know whether I know the nature of true love or not.

Li. 673—674. But if. . . . can love—But if I know what true love is, and if my feelings for Lancelot be not called true love, I am sure I can love nobody else in the world, (*i. e.*, I love Lancelot and can love no one else).

Paraphrase Li. 654—674. ‘I swear by my head, lady, that I lose the track of my search. blinded by the look of your blue eyes, as we lose the track of a lark in the blue of the sky (as it vanishes in the distance). But if you please, will you let me see the shield ?’ And when the shield was fetched and Gawain saw Sir Lancelot’s device, upon its surface—namely the blue rampant lion with manes of golden colour,—he struck his thigh in surprise and said sarcastically, ‘The king was quite correct in his surmise,—it is our Lancelot, that faithful man.’ ‘And I was correct too,’ said she joyously, ‘I who dreamt that my Knight was the greatest of all Knights.’ Gawain then said, ‘Supposing I also dreamt that you were in love with this noblest Knight, you certainly can tell me whether you really love him, though I beg your pardon for this question. Speak, shall I privē in my love for you in vain?’ Her answer was very simple : ‘What do I know about love ?’ My brothers have been my sole companions, and when they discussed the subject

of love, I wished my mother had been alive and joined in the discussion, for they talked, I thought, on a subject they knew nothing about. I am also like my brothers in this respect. I am not sure whether I understand what sincere love is. But if I do understand the nature of love, and if I don't love Lancelot, then I can love nobody else in the world." [This is only another way of saying that she loves Lancelot deeply, and cannot love anybody else.]

L. 674. Yea—yes. By God's death—an oath; by the death of Christ.

L. 676. But would.....know—but you would not love him if you knew what other people know about him. [Here Gawain just hints at the sinful love of Lancelot for the queen].

L. 677. So be it—let it be so : *i. e.*, I don't want to discuss it. [Notice what infinite confidence she has in her beloved: she resents any allegations against him].

L. 678. Lifted her face—proudly raised her head so as to show her resentment. [Notice the proud indignation of Elaine. When Gawaine threw some evil hints against Lancelot, she got highly offended and left the place in indignation].

L. 680. Golden—very valuable. Grace—kindness. One golden minute's grace—just wait a minute; give me a minute's favour—and by giving that favour you will make this minute a precious one in my life.

L. 681. One I may not name—*i. e.*, the queen, whom he did not mention out of discretion. Would he break faith etc.—would he prove false to her whom he loves?

L. 282. True—firm in love. Like a leaf—*i. e.*, like a leaf that changes with every change of season. [Lancelot is so true and constant in his love; will he change at last? is it possible?]

L. 683. Like enow—likely enough; he may have fallen in love with you after all. [Gawaine himself was struck by the freshness and charm of Elaine. So he thinks that Lancelot may also have been charmed by her beauty, innocence and freshness].

L. 684. To cross—to stand in the way of. Far be it.....loves—I am the last person to thwart Lancelot in his love-affair. [Sir Gawaine knows the might and strength of Lancelot and so he, for his part, will never stand in the way of his love].

L. 685. Deem—think.

Ll 686—687. Let me leave....you—I shall leave Lancelot to be found out by you.

L. 587. Here—here Gawaine actually gives the diamond to Elaine.

L. 688. It will be sweet to give—you will be delighted to present him this unique prize as you love him.

L. 691. A diamond is a diamond—A diamond is a valuable thing by itself and will be gladly accepted by him whether he love you or not.

L. 693. If his love hold—if his love persistor continue.

L. 694. Hereafter—later on, Gawaine says, if Lancelot's love endures, he will marry her and take her to Arthur's court where Gwaine may possibly meet her according to the custom of the royal court.

L. 695. So—provided. Courtesies—manners. We two shall know each other—Is there any evil insinuation in the line? Does Gawaine mean that when Elaine will learn the ways of the court he will have an opportunity of establishing illegal intimacy with her? Or, does he simply mean that in the court, he will know Elaine more intimately? It is of course preferable to take the latter sense, for then also Lan-

celot, with his might and strength, would be there to protect Elaine.

L. 699. Carolling—singing.

L. 700. True-love ballad—a song of true love. (Gawaine sang the song simply because it was the fashion of the times for amorous young men to do so. He easily forgot his love episode with Elaine and went away with a light heart).

Paraphrase Ll. 675—696. Yea by God's death....
rode away—"Ah, by Christ's blood, you love him well enough; but you would not love him provided you knew what every one else is aware of,—that is, if you knew whom Lancelot loves'" "Let it be as it may" cried Elaine raising her beautiful head (in disdain) and walked off. But he followed her shouting, "Wait a while, grant a precious minute's kindness. He put on your favour—the sleeve, and he may, after all be faithless to one whom I cannot mention. Is it possible he, so firm in love, should alter so quickly like a leaf? Yes, it is likely that he may change after looking at your beauty. Why, in that case I would certainly not stand in the way of great Lancelot's amours. And, maiden, I think, you know well enough where your knight lies in hiding; I leave you to find him out. The diamond also I leave with you: it is here. For if you are in love, it will be a pleasure to you to present it to him: and if he loves you, he will also be happy to have it from the hand of his beloved. And whether he loves you or not, a diamond by itself is a valuable thing. I bid you a thousand adieus. Still, if Lancelot love you and his love persists, we may meet later on in the king's court. There, when you have learnt the manners of the court, we two will have occasion to be better acquainted with each other."

N. B.—Gawain proves himself not only disloyal to his king in giving up his quest so readily but is also a profligate youngman. No sooner does he see the beautiful Elaine than he wants to capture that 'wild flower.' He makes a pretence of love to her for some time; but when he goes away he does not part from Elaine with a heavy heart, as a true lover disappointed in his love would, but he lightly rode away "carolling a true love ballad." He is mean enough to try to turn Elaine's mind by even betraying the secret of Lancelot who is a friend and brother-at-arms to him. But he knows at last that his wiles are too weak to move the constant and pure Elaine from the object of her love and devotion.

The charming character of Elaine gradually unfolds in this long paragraph. She has loved and loved truly, so that her first question to Gawain is about Camelot and how her knight fared in the tournament there; and when she hears of Lancelot's wound, 'through her own side she felt the sharp lance go.' She shows her strength of character by resisting all the wiles of that vile Gawain who forgot his duty and began 'to play upon her,' merely because of a passing fancy. Though she is unaccustomed to the guiles of the world, her purity of heart is her sure guide; and eventually she administers a mild reproof to Gawain because he is not obeying his king and idly passing his time. The simple purity of her heart again speaks out when she says that if she has understood anything of love, she loves Lancelot and none else. How infinite, again, is her confidence in Lancelot! Gawain makes allegations against him, but she contemptuously refuses to listen to them. It is indeed a pity that Lancelot could not return her love and be a happy possessor of her glorious devotion.

Ll. 701—713. Gawain comes back to Arthur and reports his adventure. Arthur takes him to task for being disobedient to his king.

L. 701. Past—went.

L. 703. Sire—your Majesty. My liege—my lord.

L. 705. Region—country. Lighted on—found, came across.

L. 707. Our courtesy is the truest law—to accord gracious behaviour (particularly to a lady—Elaine, in this instance) is one of the principal codes of conduct among ourselves, the knights of the Round Table.

L. 708. Render—deliver it (to Lancelot).

L. 709. By mine head—an oath, signifying 'I am sure.' Hiding place—the place where he is lying concealed.

L. 710. Seldom-frowning—one who very rarely got angry.

L. 711. Too courteous truly—*i.e.*, you prove yourself over-courteous for while showing, as you think, courtesy to a woman you forget your courtesy—namely obedience—due to your king. (The phrase is uttered sarcastically.)

L. 713. Obedience . . . kings—One who obeys the command of the king observes the courtesy that is due to him; courtesy to the king consists in obeying his commands.

Explanation. Ll. 711—713. Too courteous truly! . . . due to kings—King Arthur was highly displeased when he found that Sir Gawain had not cared to obey his orders and left the diamond with the maid of Astolat. He angrily and sarcastically remarked that Sir Gawain might have shown courtesy to a

lady, but had failed to show courtesy to his king. Sir Gawain had perhaps forgotten that courtesy to the king consisted in obeying his commands. But since he had given up his quest of Lancelot, he had disobeyed his sovereign, and by doing so, he had proved himself disloyal. So, the king said that he would never again employ him in his service.

Paraphrase Ll. 701—713. From there he went to the court and informed the king what he had already learnt (from the queen), that Sir Lancelot was the unknown knight and added, ‘My lord, I acquired this much information but I could not find him though I went about on horse-back all round the locality. But I met the maid whose sleeve he wore at the tournament. She is in love with him, and thinking that the law of courtesy should guide our conduct, I handed over the diamond to her to give it to him, for I am sure she knows where he hides himself.

The king, who scarcely ever made an angry gesture, frowned and said, “ You show yourself too polite to a lady ! You will never more be employed in my service as I find that you forget to do the courtesy to your king ; courtesy to the king, I may remind you, consists in obeying his commands.

N. B.—Gawain brazenfacedly tries to defend his conduct by saying that what he did was done as courtesy to a lady. Arthur gives a fitting reply to it, saying that in pretending to be courteous to a lady he was positively discourteous to his king.

Ll. 714—772. *Sir Gaicain set tongues wagging about Lancelot and his supposed love for the maid of Astolat. The queen hearing the rumour assumed an external calmness of demeanour though she raged violently within herself.*

L. 714. He—the king. Wroth—angry, (at the king's reproach). Awe—reverential fear. All in awe—Gawain was filled with awe, because the king was offended at his conduct.

L. 715. Twenty strokes of blood—twenty heartbeats: *i.e.*, for twenty seconds. Without a word—he was so afraid that he could not utter a word.

L. 716. Lingered—stayed on. That other—the other man, *i.e.*, Sir Gawain. Staring—looking fixedly.

L. 717. Shook his hair—threw his hair back with a jerk. Strode off—walked away. Buzzed about—spread the report; [he circulated the report that Lancelot was in love with the maid of Astolat].

L. 719 All ears were pricked—every one eagerly heard the report. All tongues were loosed—everybody began to talk freely. Loosed—*i.e.*, loosened.

L. 722. Read....face—tried to know the feelings of the king by examining the expression on his countenance. Queen's—queen's face.

L. 723. Had marvel—wondered. What the....be—*i.e.*, what the girl might be like.

L. 724 Predoomed her as unworthy—Pronounced judgment against her even before seeing her that she was not fit to be loved by so great a man as Lancelot Unworthy—*i.e.*, of Lancelot. Dame—lady.

Ll. 722—724. All had marvel....unworthy—When the rumour got abroad that Lancelot was in love with Elaine, everybody wondered as to what sort of girl Elaine was, that she was able to attract Lancelot. Many maids had loved Lancelot but he had never fallen a prey to their charms. Naturally, people began to speculate about Elaine's beauty, but

they already passed their opinion about her and came to the conclusion that she could not be worthy of the great Lancelot.

L. 725. Sharp news—bitter information; cruel news.

L. 726. Noise—rumour. She, that had heard etc.—the queen, who had already heard the report.

L. 727. But—only. Sorrowing... low—Expressing a regret that a great man like Lancelot should have made love to a maid so far below his rank. Stooped so low—demeaned himself to such an extent; so debased himself.

L. 728. Marred—frustrated, spoilt. Her friend—(used ironically); this old lady pretended to be a friend of the queen. Aim—object (namely, of gauging the queen's feelings.) With pale tranquillity—assuming a colourless expression of indifference or outward calm. Marred her friend's tranquillity—the queen maintained a calm attitude and did not betray the slightest emotion on hearing the words of the old woman. Hence the object of the lady, *viz.* to know her feelings, was completely frustrated.

L. 729. Like fire—as fast as fire travels. About the courts—among the courtiers. [The news spread like wildfire in the court]

L. 730. Stubble—Stumps of grain left sticking in the ground after the corn is cut away. A nine day's wonder—an incident of absorbing interest. The phrase is used for something that awakens great interest for a time but is soon forgotten. Flared—blazed.

L. 730. The construction of the line is—Fire in dry stubble flared—a nine days' wonder.

L. 729-730. So ran . . . flared—The rumour spread among the courtier as fast as fire in a field full of dry stumps of corn, and every one felt intensely interested in this tale of Lancelot's love.

L. 732. Drink to Lancelot and Queen—formerly the knights used to drink to Lancelot and the Queen, but now on account of the report of Lancelot's love for Elaine, they once or twice drank to the health of Lancelot and Elaine.

L. 733. Pledging—drinking to the health of.

L. 734. Smiled at each other—*i.e.*, smiled at each other mischievously. [They deliberately drank to the health of Lancelot and Elaine in order to mock the queen.]

L. 735. Placid—calm. Lips severely placid—a very calm countenance. [Her face was perfectly calm, and did not betray the slightest emotion].

L. 735-736. Knot—lump. Felt the knot . . . throat—felt a lump choking her as she tried to restrain herself. [The queen maintained her severe dignity, even while she felt extreme jealousy. Never for a moment did she betray any emotion.]

L. 736. Feet unseen—feet beneath the table and so unseen by the courtiers.

L. 737-738. Crushed . . . banquet—gave vent to her unrestrainable indignation by pressing hard her feet against the floor of the banqueting hall. Banquet—feast. Beneath the banquet—*i.e.*, beneath the table.

L. 738-739. Where . . . wormwood—where the meat that was served lost all taste for her and seemed to her as bitter as wormwood.

L 739. Wormwood—it is kind of plant, very bitter to the taste. She hated all who pledged—She hated those who drank to the health of Lancelot and Elaine. [She had no reason to hate those men, but the hatred was natural to a betrayed woman as she considered herself to be, though it was irrational].

Paraphrase LI. 714-739. The king said this and left him. Angry but with reverential fear for the king, Gawain stayed there looking at him for about twenty seconds and, then giving a jerk to the mass of hair on his head, he walked off and spread tales about Elaine and her love for Lancelot. All the courtiers eagerly listened to the story and began to talk about the love of Lancelot and Elaine. Some looked intently on the king's face, and some on the queen's to gauge their feelings : and all wondered what the girl might be like, but the majority prejudged her as unfit for Lancelot. An old woman approached the queen with the bitter information. But the queen who had heard the rumour about it before, only expressed a regret that Lancelot should have loved so humble a maid, and thus frustrated her friend's object (to know her feelings) by assuming a calm and colourless appearance. In this way the story spread fast like fire among the courtiers—almost as fast as it moves on a bed of dry stumps of corn ; every one's mind was set aflame by the news of absorbing interest. At last in two or three feasts the knights did not drink to the health of Lancelot and the queen, but joined Lancelot's name to Elaine's in their toast and smiled jestingly at each other. And the queen sat there with a calm countenance while a lump rose in her throat in her passion ; and she struck her feet, which was hidden beneath the table, violently upon the floor, so as to crush, as it were, her unrestrainable passion in that

way. The fares of the feast seemed to her as bitter as wormwood and she hated all those knights who drank the health of Lancelot and Elaine in one breath.

N. B. Sir Gawain is here seen at his worst—undutiful, quick-tempered, angry with the king, but keeping silent, because he fears him. He carries tales and sets people talking about Lancelot and Elaine.

The Queen assumes great external composure though she is being tortured by wild passion within.

Ll. 740-772 *Elaine persuades her old father to allow her to go in quest of Laraine and the unknown knight who wore her favour. She says, she dreamed her knight to be ill and it was her duty to nurse him if he was so. Besides, she must hand over the diamond to him. Her father permits her to undertake the quest, and guesses that Elaine is aspiring to the love of the unknown knight who is perhaps too exalted a personage for her.*

L. 741. Here—i.e., Guinevere. Guiltless—innocent. Rival—rival in love to the Queen.

Ll. 741-742. That ever.....heart—who fondly cherished the memory of Lancelot whom she saw for one day only.

L. 743. Crept—went slowly. Mused—sat thinking.

L. 744. Stroked—patted affectionately.

L. 745. You call me wilful—reference to l. 205. Wilful—wayward.

L. 746. Who let me . . . will—who allow me to have my own way. [It is through your fault that I have become wilful. Because you never oppose my wishes, I have become wayward].

L. 747. Let me lose my wits—let me go out of my mind; would you like to see me mad?

L. 748. Let me hence—*i.e.*, let me go hence. Hence—from this place.

L. 749. Our dear Lavaine—mark the innocent artfulness of Elaine. She pretends to be anxious about Lavaine, though in fact her anxiety is all about Lancelot. She however is too shy to speak of Lancelot, and hence she pretends that she wants to go to see Lavaine. Her old father however, sees through her artifice and asks her to wait for she can not after all be so anxious about Lavaine as to lose her wits for him.

L. 751. Bide—wait. We needs must—there is no doubt that we shall shortly hear of Lavaine and Lancelot. Needs—of course.

L. 752. That other—that unknown knight who is in Lavaine's company.

L. 753. Needs must hence—I must necessarily go from here. [Now Elaine explains her real motive —she must see Lancelot].

L. 756. Lest I be found—so that I may not be found. Faithless in the quest—undutiful in the matter of searching the unknown knight.

L. 757. You proud Prince—referring to Sir Gawain. Lest I be found etc.—Sir Gawain entrusted to Elaine the task of finding out Lancelot. Hence, she says, she must go out in search of the stranger knight and show that she is not disloyal like Sir Gawain who had disobeyed his king.

Paraphrase 740—757. But far away from there—at Astolat—the Queen's innocent rival Elaine never forgot Sir Lancelot whom she had seen but for a day. And once she softly went to her father while he was alone in deep thought, and sitting on his lap, patted his white-haired face and said, "You say that I am wilful, but it is due to your fault, because you always allow me to have my own way; and my dear father, will you let me go mad?" "Certainly not" said he. "So," she replied, "let me go hence and search out our dear Lavaine." "I am quite sure you will not go mad for dear Lavaine;" said he, "wait, for we are sure to hear shortly of him and of that unknown knight." "Yes" she went on, "regarding that unknown knight,—I should really start from here to find him wherever he may be, for I have to give this diamond to him with my own hand. I want to show by my action that I am not lacking in a sense of duty like that proud knight, who entrusted the search to me."

L. 758. Behold—see.

L. 759. Gaunt—lean, haggard. The skeleton of himself—reduced merely to skin and bone.

L. 760. Death pale—having the pallor of death upon him; pale like a dead man. For lack....aid—for want of nursing by soft female hands.

L. 759—760. Suret father.....maiden's aid—O my loving father, I seem to see him in my dreams, as thin as a skeleton and as pale as a dead man—simply because he has no gentle maiden at his side to nurse him.

L. 761. The gentler maiden—the better the family in which a maiden is born. The more bound—the more (she is) under obligation (to be sweet etc).

L. 761—764. The gentler maiden.....worn their tokens—The higher the family in which a maiden is born, the more, my father, is she obliged to serve sweetly and gently, the great knights in their illness—specially when they have worn her favour.

L. 765. Nodding—i.e., nodding his head to express his approval.

L. 766. Ay, ay, the diamond—yes, the diamond, the prize of the tournament, which the knight has won, has also to be given to him. Wit ye well—you know it well.

L. 767. Right fain—very glad. Were I—I would have been. Whole—in sound health; recovered completely.

L. 768. Being our greatest—he being etc. Nom. Absolute. [Since he is our greatest knight, I would be very glad to learn that he has thoroughly recovered.]

L. 769. This fruit—i.e., Sir Lancelot. Is hung too high—is too highly placed in rank.

L. 770. For any....queen's—for any one to aspire to (in the way of marriage) except a queen. The metaphor employed is of a fruit too high on a tree and coveted by people. To gape for—to attempt to secure; to desire for.

[N. B.—Ll. 669—670 are parenthetically put in by the wise father of Elaine almost to himself, as he suspects that Elaine a simple maid may be attracted by the unknown knight who must be too exalted for her.]

Ll. 769—770. And sure I think... queen's—the father of Elaine could easily guess that she was attracted towards Lancelot; he said almost to himself that Lancelot was too lofty a person to be

within the reach of an humble maiden like Elaine; a queen could aspire to his hand—but never a simple girl like Elaine.

L. 771. Nay, I mean nothing—This is said to Elaine who was wondering what her father meant by the two previous lines that were not meant for her understanding. By saying that he does not mean anything serious by what he has just said, the wise father wants to disarm any suspicion that might have been aroused in his daughter's mind by his last remark. So then—since you are so desirous to go. Get you gone—you have my permission to go.

L. 772. Wilful—obstinate, wayward. You must go—I can hardly prevent you from going. [Wilful as you are, you will not allow me rest and peace, until I give you permission to go.]

Paraphrase Ll. 753—772. "Dear father, I see him in my dreams as being very lean and reduced to merely a pack of bones, pale like a dead man, for want of the ministration of a soft-hearted maiden. The higher the birth and parentage of a maiden, the more is she under an obligation, you know very well, father, to serve a noble knight in illness, specially one who wears her favour in his adventures. Allow me to go, O father, I request you." Her father nodded his head in assent and said, 'Oh yes, the diamond also has got to be delivered; you know well, my child, I would be very glad if I could know this knight was safe and sound as he is our greatest knight in the realm. And you must give it to him. But I am sure Lancelot is like a fruit too highly placed on the tree, for any other woman to secure him than a queen! No, I do not mean anything in particular. So, you start on your errand, since you must go because you are so obstinate.'

N.B.—Elaine wants to go in quest of the unknown knight under the pretence of going in search of Lavaine. But her real desire is so palpable that every one can find it out; her old father does understand it and becomes afraid lest his simple daughter should have fallen in love with that great knight who must be far above her. Whether she betrays herself or not in her talk with her father,—a woman in love as she is,—go she must when she suspects her knight to be dangerously ill and requiring her nursing.

L. 772—837. *As Elaine started on the quest with Sir Torre she had a presentiment that death would be the sequel to this venture of hers. But she was nevertheless happy as she would be glad to sacrifice her life for the sake of her beloved. As they came near the gates of Camelot they met Laraine exercising his horse. Laraine, amazed at their approach was told all when Torre left them. Laraine conducted her to Lancelot who was still found to be very ill. She presented his prize, the diamond, to him and he gave her an innocent kiss for her dutifulness and service. But from her demeanour he presently came to learn that she perhaps was eager to give him her love which he did not at all encourage and he turned his face away from her, pretending to sleep.*

L. 773. Lightly—with nimble feet (adv. modifying ‘slipt’). Her suit allow’d—her prayer being granted (‘suit’ is a Nominative Absolute). Slipt—i.e. slipped went off.

L. 774. She made her ready—she prepared herself; (her—herself).

L. 775. Latest word—last remark. Hummed—softly rang.

L. 777. Changed itself—the nominative of this is ‘latest word’ in l. 775. Changed ... heart—her father’s last remark repeatedly rang in her mind with a slight variation ;—she seemed to hear in her fancy the words, “ being so wilful, you must die.” [Thus she had a presentiment of her fate].

L. 779. Shook it off—dismissed the thought, for she was delighted with the prospect of going to Lancelot and nursing him.

L. 780. As we....at us—as we fling off a bee that annoys us by its noise near about us. [The curious presentiment was uncomfortable to her like the buzzing of a bee ; and she drove away the thought from her mind as one drives away a bee.]

L. 781-772. And in ...life—she met this premonition by saying within herself that she would not mind dying if only she could restore Lancelot to life and health.

L. 782. So—provided. What matter....life. What does it matter if I lose my life provided I can be useful in restoring him to life. [This thought made her ‘happy enough’ (l. 779.)]

L. 784. Long back....down—Notice the trick of repeating the same phrases again and again to bring the picture described forcefully before the mind.

L. 785. City gates—the gates of the city of Camelot.

L. 786. Came on—met.

L. 787. Roan—of a mixed colour. Roan horse—a horse, the coat of which has two colours as black and white or red and grey and so on. Caper—to jump in a sprightly manner. Curvet—to jump (with curved body) with all the feet off the ground. (The word is formed from the word, ‘curve’).

L. 788. For pleasure—for his pleasurable exercise.

L. 788. All about.....flowers—in and about a field full of flower plants showing that the time is summer. This is again proved by the phrase, 'the casement standing wide for heat' (l. 126).

N. B The story in the *Idylls of the King* runs through the seasons of one full year, "the phases of nature in their succession forming a back-ground for the successive scenes of the poem." The seasons in which the events of the various Idylls occurred are indicated in each Idyll by some descriptive touch, as here.

Ll. 786-788. Her brother with a happy face etc.—Sir Lavaine seemed to be in high spirits, for he was taking exercise on his horse. He was performing dexterous feats of horsemanship, making him caper and leap on all four legs.

L. 790 Amazed—surprised. Lavaine was exceedingly surprised to see his brother and sister there.

L. 791. Why here?—why are you come here? Sir Lancelot—Lavaine is surprised to find that Elaine knows the name of Sir Lancelot.

L. 793. All her tale—the whole story regarding Sir Gawain's search of Lancelot.

L. 794. In his moods—in one of his sudden fits of gloom; Sir Torre seemed to be subject to such fits of melancholy.

L. 795. Strange-statued gate—the gate of Camelot having strange statue on or before it. [Another instance of alliterative compound so often used by Tennyson.]

L. 796. Rendered—represented. Mystically—symbolically. Where.....mystically—where the pictures and the sculpture represented in a symbolical manner the adventures and wars of King Arthur.

L. 797. Past—passed. Still—quiet; silent. Kin—relations.

L. 789. Far blood—distant relations. Which dwelt—who lived.

Paraphrase Ll. 773—798. Her prayer being granted, she walked away with nimble feet, and she made preparations for her journey. In her fancy, her father's last remark, "since you are so wilful you must go," was changed, and the word 'die' in place of 'go,' began constantly to ring in her ears. But she was, nevertheless, glad, and drove away the thought from her mind in the same way as we drive away a bee that annoys us by buzzing in our ears. She silenced her misgivings by saying within herself, 'what does my death matter if I can restore him to life?' Then with good Sir Torre as her escort she rode over the wide stretch of bleak highlands to Camelot and in front of the gates of the city came across her brother Sir Lavaine, who with a happy countenance was riding a horse of variegated colour and making it frisk and jump on all fours in a field full of flowers. As she saw him she cried "Lavaine, how is Sir Lancelot doing?" He exclaimed with surprise, "Torre and Elaine! why are you here? You enquire about Sir Lancelot, but how do you know that he is Sir Lancelot?" But when Elaine had related all her story, Sir Torre, in one of his fits of gloom left them and passed through the gate decorated with strange sculptured figures,—the gate on which were symbolically represented the wars of King Arthur—passed through the magnificent but silent city to his distant blood-relations that lived at Camelot.

L. 799. Her—obj. of 'led' in l. 800.

L. 800. Casque—helmet.

L. 801. Her scarlet sleeve—the same sleeve which she had given to Sir Lancelot.

L. 802. Carved and cut—rent and lacerated. Away—*i.e.*, stripped off.

L. 803. Streamed from it—hung from the helmet. [The sleeve was still hanging on the helmet.] Laughed in her heart—was filled with joy.

L. 804. Loosed—loosened, taken it off.

L. 805. Perchance—perhaps. [She was happy to think that perhaps Lancelot wanted to wear her sleeve in another tournament.]

L. 806. Gained—reached.

L. 807. Battle-writhen arms—arms with muscles twisted and knotted by constant exercise in warfare. Mighty—powerful, strong.

L. 808. Naked—uncovered. Wolf-skin—tanned skin of wolf with which the bed was covered.

L. 808-809. A dream....move—perhaps Lancelot was dreaming a dream in which he was pulling down an opponent and so the hands seemed to move though he was asleep.

L. 810. Unsleek—haggard. Unshorn—with his hair uncut, untrimmed and untidy.

L. 811. Gaunt—lean. Skeleton—merely the bony frame without any flesh on it. [He had become so lean that he seemed to be reduced to a skeleton].

L. 812. Tender dolorous cry—soft mournful lament. Dolorous cry—a cry of pain and sorrow.

L. 813. Wonted—accustomed ; usual. Still—quiet.

L. 814. Rolled his eyes—cast his glance this way and that; looked about to see from whence the sound came.

L. 815. Yet blank from sleep—yet with a vacant look, for he was just roused from sleep. Started—went.

L. 817. Glisten'd—shone. [Why did his eyes glisten? Is it because now the tale of diamonds that he wanted to present to the queen was complete?] She fancied me—she wondered whether the glitter in the eyes was due to his love for her and his joy in seeing her.

L. 819. Of King and Prince—of King Arthur and Sir Gawaine. Sent—passive part, qualifying 'diamond.' *N. B.* King, Prince, quest, diamond—are all objects of 'of' in line 819.

L. 819—820. The quest. of it—the fact of her being charged with the search of Lancelot though she was unworthy of such an undertaking.

L. 821. Full lowly—very humbly (or stooping very low).

Paraphrase Ll. 799—822. And Lavaine conducted her through the poplar forest to the caves (where Lancelot was). First of all, as they reached there, she saw the helmet of Lancelot hung on the wall. The red sleeve given by her, though torn and rent, and half its pearls lost, still hung from it and she smiled within herself, seeing that he had not put it off from his helmet, and thought that perhaps he wanted again to wear her favour in another joust. And when she reached the small closet in which he slept, she saw his arms with muscles, knotted and twisted by constant exercise in wars, and his powerful hands, lying bare on the wolfskin (covering the bed); and his hands moved, for he was dreaming that he was pulling down an opponent on the battlefield. Seeing him so haggard, untidy, and lean almost to a skeleton she raised a short and low scream of

sorrow and agony. The sound not usual in a region so calm and quiet, awakened the sick Knight; and while he cast his gaze this way and that with a vacant look she went to him saying 'Here is your prize, the diamond sent to you by King Arthur.' His eyes shone in excitement to see the big and bright diamond. She wondered whether the glitter in the eyes was due to his joy in seeing her. And when she had given him the whole story about Arthur, Sir Gawaine, about the diamond and the search entrusted to her unworthy self, she knelt very humbly by the corner of his bed and placed the diamond in his open hand.

L. 823--824. As we . . . face—with the same spirit as we kiss a little child that has done well an appointed duty, Lancelot kissed the face of Elaine. (There was however no trace of *love* in that kiss; it was a pure, innocent and affectionate kiss).

L. 825. She slipped . floor—she sank down on the floor because the excitement of being kissed by her lover unnerved her for the time being. [Elaine thought that the kiss was inspired by love, and so she was thoroughly overpowered.]

L. 826 Lancelot however thought that Elaine was fatigued by the long ride.

L. 827. Rest must you have—you need rest. No rest for me—I do not need any rest.

L. 828. For near . . . rest—if I remain close by you I feel no weariness and enjoy perfect ease.

L. 829 That—her last utterance.

L. 830. Yet larger . . . illness—Lancelot's large eyes looked larger for his body had been thinned by sickness. Dwelt upon her—gazed at her.

L. 831. Her heart's sad secret—the inmost secret of her heart—*viz.*, her love for Lancelot. It is called 'sad' because it had a sad end.

Ll. 831—32. Till....face—As he looked fixedly upon her, the secret of her love revealed itself vividly in the crimson blush of her face, for she did not know the art of hiding an emotion. Blazed itself—revealed itself clearly in the flush.

L. 832. In the heart's colours—in the crimson blush (produced by the rush of blood from the heart to the face). Simple face—she was simple and innocent and could not therefore hide her emotion.

L. 833. Perplext—disturbed.

L. 834. Said no more—because Lancelot was physically weak, he did not like to speak.

L. 835. Did not.... colour—did not like this red blush on her face, which clearly indicated her passion. [Lancelot loved the queen and did not like that Elaine should be in love with him, for he could not return her love].

L. 836. Save one—except one love, namely, Queen Guinevere's love. Not regarded—did not value, did not care for.

L. 837. Sighing—because he was sorry he would hurt the girl as he was unable to return her love. Feigned—pretended. [He closed his eyes pretending to sleep, until he actually felt asleep.]

Paraphrase Ll. 823—37. Her face was near Lancelot's and he kissed her in the same way as we kiss a child who has done well an appointed duty. At once she inertly sank down on the floor unable to control herself. "Alas" said Lancelot, "your long journey has tired you out, you must have some rest." "No rest is necessary for me," said she, "no, my lord, for by your side I feel perfectly at rest" What did she hint when she said that? Lancelot's big black eyes looking larger still on account

ef his emaciated body, were fixed upon her till the secret of her love revealed itself in the rush of blood from her heart on her countenance that knew no guile. As Lancelot saw this he got a little puzzled and being physically weak said nothing, but did not like that blush. He valued no woman's love except one (that of Guinevere) and so turned his face with a sigh and pretended to sleep till he actually fell asleep.

N. B.—Elaine shows herself ready to sacrifice even her life for her beloved and hence she willingly undertakes a hazardous venture for the sake of Lancelot. She is innocent and guileless and hence cannot ^g hide her emotion.

Sir Torre is here, again, a moody young man, who suddenly leaves his brother and sister to meet his own kin at Camelot. Sir Torre is in this way disposed of by the poet because he is no more wanted during the interview between Lancelot and Elaine.

Lancelot though bearing a guilty love for Guinevere is not an ordinary profligate young man like Sir Gawaine, who as soon he saw Elaine, wanted to possess her. His love though guilty is unwavering. He gives only a brotherly kiss to Elaine who gets unnerved because, loving him as she did, she misconstrues its meaning. As soon as Lancelot understands her, he throws cold water over her passion and like an honest man that he is, in no way encourages her.

LI. 838—872. *Elaine put up with one of her kins and nursed Lancelot from morning till night. Her care and devotion at last brought him round and Lancelot began to love her as a dear sister but could*

*not give her a lover's passion as he remained constant
in his guilty love for the Queen.*

L. 838. Glided—walked smoothly with noiseless steps. The word suggests the maidenly and graceful gait of Elaine.

L. 839. Weirdly-sculptured gates—gates with mysterious sculptural devices upon them; gates decorated with strange and mysterious statues.

L. 840. Dim—because of evening twilight.

L. 841. Bode—stayed.

L. 842. Dim—because of morning twilight. Notice the repetition of the phrase 'dim rich city.'

L. 844. Either—both. In either twilight—in the twilight both of the morning and evening. [She used to come to Lancelot's abode in the morning, nursed her all the day and returned to Camelot in the evening. Ghost-like to and fro—went to the cave where Lancelot lay in the morning twilight and returned to Camelot in the evening dusk; both the times, she looked like a ghostly figure in the partial darkness.

L. 845. Gliding—moving swiftly; the word suggests the flitting movement of a spirit, and is quite appropriate here, for Elaine is compared to 'ghost.' Tended—nursed.

L. 846. Like wise—in the same manner. [She remained at night and nursed him, if she was required to do so.]

L. 847. Would—connected with 'seem' in l. 849. He called....hurt—he said that his wound was no serious one.

L. 848. Whereof.....whole—which would be quickly healed up.

L. 849. Brain-feverous—suffering from brain-fever. Heat—fever. Agony—pain.

L. 850. Even he—a parenthetical clause employed for the sake of emphasis *i.e.*, even he would seem uncourteous : [Lancelot, the very mirror of courtesy, would sometimes be rude to Elaine in moments of high fever and delirium.] Meek—submissive ; gentle.

L. 851. Forbore him ever—always patiently bore his rudeness. [Though Lancelot spoke harshly to her in his delirium, she never took offence, but bore very patiently with him].

L. 853. Milder—softer, tenderer.

Ll. 852—853. Elaine was more gentle towards Lancelot than a child towards a rude nurse or a mother towards a sick child.

L. 854. Since man's first fall—since Adam's fall from Paradise, *i.e.*, since the beginning of the world.

L. 855. Did—having for its nom. 'woman' in L. 854. Did... man—rendered kinder service to any man

L. 856. Upbore—sustained, gave her patience and strength to carry on.

Ll. 854—856. And never woman.....upbore her—no woman, since the beginning of the world, has more tenderly served man than Elaine served her lover. In all this patient and untiring service, she was sustained by her deep love for Lancelot.

L. 857. Simples—herbs that heal. The science—*i.e.*, the medical science. Skilled in all ...that time—well-verses in the healing properties of herbs and plants and also in the science of medicine that was known at that early age.

L. 858. Fine care—delicate nursing. Her fine care had saved him—the hermit, who treated Lancelot, said that Lancelot owed his life to Elaine's delicate and patient nursing rather than to his medicine.

Paraphrase Ll. 838—858. Elaine then got up and walked noiselessly through the fields and gates with strange carvings and statues upon them, into the magnificent but dim city and passed the night with her relations here. But as the day broke, she got up and walked again through the twilight into the fields and from there again to the cave. So from day to day both in morning and evening twilights, she moved like a ghost along the road to the cave and back from it and nursed Lancelot at day time and if necessary, she remained at night also. And though, Lancelot thought his wound to be a trivial one which would soon be healed up, he would at times be discourteous to her, (a perfect knight as he was) in his delirium that resulted from her fever and pain. But the submissive maid always bore his rudeness with gentle sweetness, and she was more docile than any child to a rude nurse and more tender than a mother to a sick baby. Never in the history of man—since Adam's fall from paradise—was a man so kindly nursed by a woman. But her deep love sustained her. At last the ascetic, well-versed in the properties and application of healing herbs and the medical science of those days, told Lancelot that it was Elaine's delicate care that had given him back his life.

L. 859. Simple blush—*i.e.*, the blush that Lancelot had seen in her face before—the blush that had told the tale of her heart.

L. 850. Sweet Elaine—he addressed her as *sweet Elaine* in brotherly affection.

L. 861—862. Would listen tenderly—would keep his ears on the alert to catch the sound of her coming footfall, and would be sorry when she went away, and entertained great affection for her.

L. 862. Held her tenderly—treated her with great love and affection.

L. 863—866. Loved her with all love for her sake—Lancelot loved Elaine most tenderly and affectionately. But he loved her like a sister and could even sacrifice his life for her sake like the true knight that he was; his love was not sex-love—not that love, which a man feels for a woman, and which denotes the greatest intimacy and tenderest relation between a man and woman.

L. 865. Had died—would have died.

L. 867. Peradventure—perhaps. Had he first—*i.e.* if he had seen her before Guinevere.

L. 868. This world—*i.e.* Lancelot would have been happy in his life. That other world *i.e.*—the next life. If he had loved and married Elaine, he would have lived a pure life in this world which would ensure his happiness in the next world.

L. 867—869. And peradventure sick men—If Lancelot had seen Elaine before Guinevere, he would perhaps have loved her and married her. In that case, he would have been happy in this world and the next world; he would have lived a pure life in this world, and consequently gained peace and happiness in the next.

L. 870. Shackles—bonds. Old love—*i.e.* love for Guinevere. Straitened him—restricted his love. The shackles straitened him—His constancy to Guinevere stood in the way of his loving Elaine. Just as a man in fetters cannot move freely, so

Lancelot chained in the fetters of his old love for Guinevere, was not free to love Elaine.

L. 871. Honour—sense of honour. Rooted—fixed. Stood rooted in—was firmly bound to. Dishonour—guilt and shame : his guilty love for Guinevere. His honour rooted . . . stood—his sense of honour required him to remain constant to Guinevere ; he was fully conscious of his guilt, but he could not break away from the queen, for he was a man of constant and honourable nature. Thus it was a point of honour with him to continue his guilty relations with the queen.

L. 872. Faith—*i.e.*, his faith or constancy to the queen. Unfaithful—involving faithlessness or treachery to his king and friend, Arthur. Faith unfaithful—his constancy to Guinevere, which made him false and faithless to his king. Falsely—treacherously. True—*i.e.*, true to Guinevere. Falsely true—true or constant to Guinevere, but false or treacherous to King Arthur. And faith unfaithful . . . true—he remained loyal and constant to Guinevere, but by doing so, he was guilty of falsehood and treachery to his king and friend Arthur.

Explanation. Ll. 867—872. And peradventure had he seen . . . falsely true—Lancelot's feeling for Elaine was one of pure brotherly affection. He could not love her because he was constant to Guinevere. If he had seen her before Guinevere, he would probably have married her, and her life would have been very happy and peaceful. But that was not possible now, for, endowed with a rare sense of honour as he was, he would not certainly prove false to Guinevere. Thus, he was bound to his guilty passion, and though he remained constant to Guinevere, he was false to Arthur. His constancy was therefore the cause of

his treachery and his sense of honour involved him in falsehood and dishonour. Thus, the greatest tragedy of Lancelot's life and character was that his honour and constancy led him to falsehood and treachery; his faith to the queen made him treacherous to his king.

[In Ll. 871 and 872, there is a fine use of the figure of speech called Oxymoron. In this figure, seemingly *contradictory* words and phrases are used to enhance the effect. Here the words "honour and dishonour," "faith unfaithful" and "falsely true" are contradictory; but they are used rightly to express the peculiar situation of Lancelot. He is true to Guinevere but false to Arthur—hence he is 'falsely true'; he is faithful to Guinevere but unfaithful to Arthur—hence his faith is unfaithful; and because his sense of honour made him stick to dishonourable passion for Guinevere, it is rightly said that his honour stood rooted in dishonour.

Paraphrase Ll. 859—872. Lancelot forgot all about the ingenuous blush that had appeared on her face on the very first day of her coming to the cave; and called her sweet Elaine, his friend and sister; he would eagerly wait for her arrival in the morning and would feel sad at her departure in the evening; he treated her with great affection and loved her like a sister: but he did not entertain towards her that love which a man feels towards a woman when they love each other best and most sweetly; he would, however, be prepared to sacrifice even his life for her sake. And it might be that if he had seen her before Guinevere, he would have married her and lived a pure and happy life here and gained his reward for his good life in the heaven after death. But it could not be, for he was chained in the fetters of a guilty love. It was a

part of his honour to remain true to Guinevere, even though he was conscious of his guilt, and thus his fidelity to Guinevere made him false and treacherous to his friend and king, Arthur.

L. 872—898. *Elaine is filled with deep sorrow when she realises that her efforts to win the affection of Lancelot are vain.*

L. 873. Yet—though he clung to his guilty passion for Guinevere The great knight—*i.e.*, Lancelot. Mid-sickness—in the middle period of his illness.

L. 874. Full many a—a good many. Holy vow—pious promise. Pure resolve—determination to lead a pure life. [During his sickness, Lancelot resolved to lead a pure life].

L. 875. These—*i.e.*, vows and resolves. But born of sickness—only resulting from his diseased condition. Live—continue after the illness was cured. These as but boon.... not live—these holy vows and resolutions were forgotten when he recovered; during his illness, when his passions were weak, he could make these resolves, but with restoration to health, they again asserted themselves, and his vows, therefore, melted away.

L. 876. Lustier—more vigorously. When the blood ... again—when his passions grew stronger with his recovery.

L. 877. Image—picture, One face—*i.e.*, Guinevere's.

L. 878. Making a treacherous quiet—soothing his mind, only to disturb it the very next moment by fits of passion. As he pictured to himself the beautiful face of Guinevere, his mind was soothed into peace; but as he continued to contemplate it for sometime his passion for her revived with great vehemence and destroyed his peace.

L. 879. Dispersed.....cloud—shattered his resolves as a piece of cloud is scattered by a storm.

L. 877—879. Full often the bright image.....cloud—Very often the picture of the shining beauty of Guinevere would lull his mind into an apparent calm like the lull before a storm ; but it would soon be agitated by a rising gust of passion that would sweep away all his pious resolves as a storm scatters a drifting piece of cloud.

L. 880. The maiden—*i.e.*, Elaine. Ghostly grace—that visionary picture of Guinevere's beauty. Grace—*i.e.*, the beauty of Guinevere, which he saw in his fancy ; the grace or beauty of Guinevere.

L. 881. Beamed on his fancy—shone before his imagination.

While that ghostly grace.....fancy—when the beautiful image of Guinevere was present before his his mind's eye. Spoke—its nominative is 'the maiden' in l. 880.

L. 882. Short and coldly—curtly and with indifference.

Ll. 880—882. Then if the maidenly....short and coldly—at the time when the radiant beauty of Guinevere appeared before his mind's eye, if Elaine were to speak to him, he would either not answer at all or would give curt and indifferent answers.

L. 882. Right well—very well.

L. 883. Rough sickness—rudeness due to illness. This—*i.e.* the short and indifferent answers ; his cold indifference.

Ll. 882—884. She knew....knew not—she could understand that his harsh attitude at the time of his sickness had been due to his pain and agony ; but his cold indifference, at the time when he was recovering, was beyond her comprehension:

L. 884. Dimmed her sight—brought tears into her eyes so as to dim her vision. [She took his cold indifference so much to heart that she would sometimes weep bitterly.]

L. 885. Drove—drove. Ere her time—before it was her time to leave Lancelot for the day. [Sometimes, she would be so deeply filled with sorrow at his indifference, that she would go away before the usual time of her departure]

L. 887. Vain—my hope of winning his love is vain.

L. 889. How then—what is to be done then? What shall I do if he does not love me? [Elaine loves Lancelot so deeply that she cannot live without his love].

L. 890. Plain passage—simple strain of music. Of few notes—consisting of a limited number of notes.

L. 891. O'er and o'er—again and again.

L. 892. For all—throughout. April morning—denoting spring-time.

L. 893. Wearies—gets tired. [One gets tired of the same note because it is repeated again and again.] Simple—artless.

L. 894. Went—continued (repeating the same note for half the night). Then as little helpless.... . . . must I die—just as a simple innocent bird, that knows only a simple strain consisting of a very few notes, keeps repeating the same strain over and over again on a spring morning, till one gets tired of it, so the simple and innocent Elaine in her mortification and disappointment, continued to repeat to herself throughout half the night, the single phrase, "Must I then have to die?"

896. In rest—remaining in the same position. [The thought of her hopeless love made her so restless that she kept turning on her bed from right to left and from left to right but she did not find any relief in any position, whether she turned on her sides or lay still on the bed.]

L. 897. Him or death—I must have him or die.

L. 898. Burthen—burden or refrain of a song; the portion of a song that is repeated over and over again. Like a burthen—she repeated this sentence like the refrain (of a song) that recurs after every stanza.

Paraphrase II 873—98. Still the great Knight in the midst of his illness made quite a number of pious vows and honest resolves. These resolves later proved ineffectual as they were only made during illness. For when the healthy blood began to course more vigorously through him, many times the radiant picture of one face (Guinevere's) appeared before his fancy ; and though it soothed him for a moment, his mind was soon ruffled by a rising gust of passion which shattered all his pious resolves like a storm scattering a piece of cloud. And while that visionary image of that the charming face of Guinevere shone before his imagination, if the maiden spoke to him, he did not give any reply or if he did, he replied only briefly and with cold indifference. She knew very well the cause of his rudeness during his sickness, but she did not know what this cold indifference meant ; and grief roused tears in her eyes and blurred her vision ; and in her grief she would leave Lancelot before the usual time for the distant city where she softly said to herself 'Oh it is vain, it is an impossibility—he won't love me. What to do then? Am I then to die?' Now the artless maid

passed half the night repeating to herself the same query, 'Have I then got to die?' in the same way as a small weak innocent bird that can but sing one simple strain of no very various tones repeats it again and again throughout an April morn till one gets tired of hearing it. And she tossed on the bed, once to the right and then to the left and found peace neither in tossing nor in repose. 'Him or death : death or him' she went on murmuring to her-
to herself and again and again she went on uttering; like the refrain of a song, 'Him or death.'

N. B. Lancelot is unflinching in his guilty passion and does not care for any other woman, and Elaine is filled with despair when she finds that Lancelot is to her, a distant star whom she cannot reach.

L. 899—958. When Lancelot recovers they return to Astolat. On the day of his departure, she confesses her love and wants to be Lancelot's wife. Lancelot says that he will not marry and that she should marry some younger man whom he could, (if he were poor), endow with lands from his own territory. And as a token of his obligation to her he would ever after be her knight in all her quarrels.

L. 899. Deadly—mortal. Hurt—wound. Whole—healed.

L. 900. The three—Lavaine, Elaine and Lancelot.

L. 901. Morn by morn—every morning. Arraying her sweat self—dressing herself.

L. 902. That—i.e., that dress. Wherein—in which dress. Deemed—thought. She looked her best—she looked most beautiful. [She dressed herself in her best to attract Lancelot.]

L. 904. Festal robes—ceremonial dress. The victim's flowers—the flowers decorating a victim that is being led to sacrifice. Fall—dies.

L. 904—905. If I be loved . . . he fall—if Lancelot love me, these gay clothes of mine will symbolise my joy; if he does not, they will be a symbol of my doom like the flowers decorating a victim that is led to sacrifice.

L. 905. Ever prest upon—constantly urged.

L. 907. Goodly gifts—handsome present. [Lancelot loved Elaine like a sister and was grateful to her for her kind nursing; so he wanted to give her something as a token of his affection and gratitude.]

L. 908. Hers—her relations. Shun—avoid; hesitate.

L. 909. The wish most near . . . heart—the dearest wish of your heart.

L. 910—911. Make my will of yours—i.e., your wish shall be mine; I shall fulfil your wishes. Will—wish.

L. 912. What I . . . can—I have the power to carry out every wish of mine; whatever I wish I can easily execute.

L. 913. Like a ghost—i.e., pale like a ghost.

L. 914. Without the power to speak—she remained speechless like a ghost, owing to her nervous excitement. [It is a popular belief that the ghost cannot speak.]

L. 915. Withheld—did not reveal. [Lancelot noticed that she had a wish but did not speak out through modesty.]

L. 916. Bode—lived. Space—i.e., space of time; for some time.

L. 917. It—her wish. [Lancelot lived at Astolat for sometime in order to know the dearest wish of her heart.] It chanced—it so happened.

L. 918. Garden yews—note that it is exactly at this spot that Gawaine had courted Elaine.

L. 920. Seeing—considering. Brake—broke. Out she brake—she burst out into a passionate speech.

L. 922. One bold word—that I love you. [If I lack boldness to speak out now, I shall die with the secret of my love pressing heavily on my heart.]

L. 923. That I live to hear is yours—It is due to you that I am still alive to hear what you say. Yours—due to your care. [The fact that I am alive to day is due to your tender and careful nursing.]

L. 925. Let me die—she thinks that Lancelot is too high for her, and so in despair she says, she wants death. At first she has not courage enough to say that she wants him.

L. 926. Ah sister etc—Lancelot fails sympathy for Elaine, for he cannot return her love.

L. 927. Extending—stretching.

L. 928. Your love etc.—Lancelot's tender, and affectionate tone makes her bold to say that she wants his love.

Paraphrase Ll. 899—928. But as soon as Lancelot's mortal wound was healed up, they three rode together and returned to Astolat. There every morning dressing herself in the costume in which she thought she looked most beautiful, she approached Sir Lancelot and thought, 'If Lancelot love me, these clothes will be a fitting symbol of my joy.'

if not, they will be emblems of my doom like the flowers which decorate a victim led to sacrifice.' Lancelot constantly urged Elaine to ask of him some fair gift—either for her own sake or for her relations, and added 'Don't hesitate to intimate to me what your sincere heart most wishes for. You have served me in such a manner that your wish I consider to be mine (*i.e.*, I shall do whatever you ask me to.) I am the lord and ruler of my territories and I can do whatever I wish to.' Then pale as a ghost she raised her face, and like a ghost too, she was unable to speak. Lancelot perceived that she was concealing her wish and lived there for a little while more in order to know it. One morning it so happened that he found her among the yews of the garden and said, "Don't make any further delay, tell me your wish, as you see I leave this place today." Then she exclaimed, "Leaving? and and we won't see you any more? And I shall have to die because I lack courage to utter one word that I want to." "Out with it," said Lancelot, 'for it is due to you that I am still alive to hear you.' Then she spoke out vehemently all of a sudden, "I have gone mad: I love you: let me die for my love." "Ah sister, what passion is this?" rejoined Lancelot. And with an artless gesture she stretched her white arms and said, "I want your love,—your love—to be your wife."

L. 929. Had I. etc—If I had etc. [If I had ever thought of marriage, I would have married much earlier].

L. 930. I had been wedded—I would have been married.

L. 931. Now—*i.e.*, in this stage of my life. [I am past the marriageable age, and I shall never marry].

L. 933. Still—always [I do not aspire to be your wife ; I only desire to be with you, so as to have you always before my eyes].

L. 935. The world—the people of the world.

L. 936. All ear and eye—the people of the world are always trying to overhear what others say and are always spying on the lives and actions of others. The phrase is in apposition with 'world.' [People are extremely suspicious and are always prying into the affairs of others].

L. 936—937. With such a.....eye—the world stupidly gives a bad meaning to what it hears and sees ; people are always prone to put a bad construction on what they see and hear.

L. 937—938. Such a tongue....interpretation—the world loudly proclaims the meaning that it gives to what it hears and sees. To blare—to trumpet, to proclaim.

Explanation Ll. 935—938.—Nay, the world..... interpretation—As Elaine says she does not aspire to be Lancelot's wife but she simply asks the favour of being allowed to accompany him through the world, Lancelot replies—"You want to follow me through the world, you say. No, that cannot be, for you don't know the world; it is always trying to pry into people's conduct and to overhear stealthily what they say ; it foolishly puts a bad construction on whatever it hears and sees and loudly proclaims its own silly conclusions." [The word 'world' is used here to mean 'The people in general of the world,' the generality of mankind].

L. 939. Full ill—very badly. ['Ill' is an adverb modifying "quite." Quite—repay.

Ll. 935—940. Nay, the world.....kindness—When Elaine proposed that she would serve Lancelot

and remain with him, Lancelot dissuaded her saying that it was impossible, for the people of the world were suspicious and would put a wrong construction upon her conduct. They were in the habit of prying into the affairs of others, misinterpreting their actions and then circulating every report far and wide. So, if Elaine were to live with Lancelot without being married to him, there would be any amount of scandal to the family, and he would be proving himself most ungrateful to her brother and father, if he were to agree to her proposals."

L. 941—942. **Not to be . . . done**—The construction is : " Alas for me then,—not to be with you etc, . . . means that my good days are done."

L. 942. **Alas for me**—woe for me. **Good days are done**—happy days have come to an end for I shall soon die. [If I do not see you, I shall soon die.]

L. 943. **Ten times nay**—I shall repeat ten times that what you say is wrong.

L. 944—945. **This is not . . . common**—your feeling is not real love: this is but the first rush of tumultuous passion that ordinarily young persons feel in the prime of their youth. **Flash**—a sudden blaze.

L. 945. **Most common**—a usual feature of youth. **Yea, . . . self**—Oh yes, I know about it from my own experience of life.

L. 946. **Will smile . . . self**—will smile at this action of your immature years.

L. 947. **Hereafter**—after this. **Yield**—give away. **Your flower of life**—your pure and beautiful life; your life, which can be fitly compared to a flower in purity and beauty.

L. 948. One more fitly yours—one who would be a fit husband for you. Not... age—not three times as old as you (like myself). [Your feeling for me is a sudden outburst of passion ; it is not real love ; you will understand it yourself later. In fact, when you marry some body, who would be a more suitable husband for you, you would yourself smile at this foolish passion of youth].

Ll. 949—950. True you..... womanhood—you are more sincere and gentle than I believed women could ever be.

L. 951. Should your.... poor—the construction is : 'If your good knight be poor' etc.

L. 952. Endow you with—bestow on you. 'Endow' is connected with 'will' in L. 949. Broad—extensive. Broad land and territory—i.e., extensive estates.

L. 953. To—to the extent of. Realm—kingdom. Beyond—across. [Lancelot sadly misunderstands Elaine. He really thinks that her fondness for him is a passing passion, and that she will get over it in time].

L. 955. To the death—to the extent of meeting with death. My blood—i.e., my blood relation.

Ll. 955—956. Even to..... knight—in all quarrels that you may have with others, I shall take up your cause and fight even to death for you, as if you were a very near relation of mine.

Paraphrase. Ll. 929—958. Lancelot replied that if he had liked to marry, he would have married much earlier, and that it was now too late in the day for him to marry. Elaine passionately exclaimed "No, no, I do not aspire to be your wife ; only let me remain with you, serve you, follow you wherever you go," Lancelot said, "No, that cannot

be, for the world is most suspicious ; the people always pry into the affairs of others, put most ugly interpretations on what they see and hear and then spread slanders without any scruple or check. If I allow you to live with me, there would be a great scandal, and that would certainly be a bad way of repaying all the love and kindness that I have received from your brother and father." With deep sorrow she exclaimed. "Alas, then, if I cannot be with you and see your face, my days in this world are numbered." "No, noble maid," said Lancelot, "certainly not. Your feeling for me cannot be called love ; it is only the first outburst of passion that is very common in youth ; I know it from my own personal experience. And you yourself will realise it and smile at this folly of yours, when you will marry a worthy young man, who is not thrice your age (as I am) and who will prove a much more suitable husband for you. I have the highest esteem for you, for in you I see more faith and sweetness than I imagined women were capable of ; I promise that in order to make you happy, I shall bestow upon you even a half of my own lands and territories, if your husband happens to be poor. Besides, I shall be your knight and fight for your cause even to death as though you were a blood-relation of mine. This much I shall do for, but I cannot do more than this.

N. B. Lancelot is desirous of doing some good turn to Elaine in order to repay his great obligation to her. Elaine, however, is in love with him and does not care for his gratitude ; she seeks his love. She cannot open out her mind at first, but when Lancelot announces the day of his departure from Astolat, she can contain herself no longer and confesses her love desperately. But Lancelot's

"Honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true;"—
he could not therefore give her a lover's love, but
chivalrously promised to be brother to her for all
time and to be her knight in all her quarrels. In-
spite of his guilt, he shows great moral strength in
refusing Elaine's offer of love. We shudder to
think what would be her fate if Lancelot were an-
other Sir Gawaine.

L. 958—968. *Elaine faints and is carried to her tower. Her father, who has overheard their talk, now asks Lancelot to be rude to her so that she might forget him.*

L. 959. Shook—trembled. Deathly-pale—pale
like a dead man.

L. 960. Stood....nearest—She caught hold of
what firm thing was nearest to her to steady herself,
as she felt within herself a reeling sensation which
finally caused her to faint.

L. 961. Of all....nothing—I shall have nothing
to do with all the offers that you are making. Fell—
fell down in a swoon.

L. 962. Bore—carried.

L. 963. Spake—its nominative is 'father' in
l. 964. Thro' those black.....yew—through the
screen made by those thick-set yew trees (of the
garden where Lancelot and Elaine were talking.)

L. 964. Pierced—penetrated, reached. [Her
father was standing behind that hedge of yew trees
and all the time overheard the talk of Lancelot and
Elaine.] A flash—i.e., a flash of lightning; he
alludes to the expression (love's first flash in youth)
used by Lancelot to characterise Elaine's passion.

L. 965. My blossom—my flower, i.e., Elaine.

Ll. 964—965. Ay, a flash....dead—I am afraid, this passion of Elaine, which you call a mere flash of youth, will cause her death. Just as the flash of lightning strikes a man dead, so this flash of her passion will cause her death. .

L. 966. Too courteous are ye—in refusing her love you use too soft and gentle a language.

L. 967—968. I pray....passion—I request you to be rude and discourteous with her so as to diminish her passion or to kill it.

N. B.—Elaine's brief and simple utterance. 'Of all this will I nothing ;' proves the depth of her passion. The shock of the refusal though anticipated, is too much for her.

The old father of Elaine, who is deeply concerned about his daughter's welfare, fondly hits upon a simple device to kill her passion.

Paraphrase Ll. 958—968 While Lancelot was speaking to Elaine, neither blushed nor trembled ; but she grew pale like a dead man, and clutching the nearest thing to steady herself, gave the brief reply—'I shall do nothing of what you say.' She then fell into a swoon and was carried to her tower.

Her father had chanced to overhear their talk through the thick-set black yews, which stood between him and the pair. He now came forward and said to Lancelot, "That which you call a mere flash of youth will work like the flash of lightning on Elaine, and she will wither away under its shock like a flower. You are indeed very polite and courteous, Sir Lancelot ; but I request you to show her some rudeness and courtesy which may diminish or kill her passion."

Ll. 968—981. *In accordance with the request of the Lord of Astolat, Lancelot, when he left the castle,*

*did not bid farewell to Elaine though she was, he knew,
looking at him from the window. He got the shield
from her and went away.*

L. 969. Against me—against my nature. That were against me—I should be going against my nature if I were to be rude and discourteous with anybody, much more a lady. What I...will—but since you are requesting me, I shall be as rude as I possibly can.

L. 970. Toward even—at the approach of evening.

L. 971. Sent for his shield—sent some man to bring his shield. Full meekly—with great humility.

L. 972. Stript off the case—took away the covering.

L. 973. Heard his horse—heard the clattering of the hoofs of the horse against the stony pavement.

L. 974. Unclasping.....back—unfastened the bolt of the window and threw it open. Casement window.

L. 975. Gone—disappeared. Lancelot, to hurt her, in accordance with the instruction of her father, had taken her sleeve off.

L. 976. Clinking sound—jingling noise. Lancelot knew etc.—Lancelot knew by the sound that Elaine had opened the window and was looking down from her window upon him.

L. 977. By tact of love—by the instinct of love Was well aware—knew, well. [Elaine could easily knew by her instinct of love that Lancelot knew she was looking at him from the window.]

L. 979. Glanced not up—did not look up to greet her. Nor waved...hand—nor moved his hand in sign of farewell.

L. 981. One courtesy—one act of rudeness.

Paraphrase II. 963—981. Lancelot said that to show courtesy to anybody, much more a lady, would be incompatible with his nature. He stayed on for the day there, and about the evening sent somebody to get his shield. The girl rose humbly, uncovered the shield and gave it. Then when she heard the sound of the hoofs of his horse upon the stony pavement, she unbolted the window and threw it wide open. She looked from the height on Lancelot's helmet, from which, she noticed, her favour (the sleeve) had disappeared. Lancelot understood the sound of the window flinging open. And Elaine too, by her instinct of love, knew well that Lancelot was aware of the fact that she was looking upon him. Still he did not look up at her nor motioned his hand in recognition of her presence there, nor bade adieu, but sorrowfully rode away. This was the single act of rudeness that he could do.

L. 932-996. *Elaine maintained an apparent calm, but she continued to think of Lancelot, and imagined that Death was calling her,*

L. 983. His very shield—*i.e.*, even his shield.

L. 984. Empty labour—useless labour. (The case which she had made with great labour was now empty.)

L. 985-986. Still she heard him—she fancied that his voice constantly rang in her years. Still....wall—she always fancied Lancelot's image to be present between herself and the wall of the room painted with various designs. [Mr. Rowe takes 'pictured' in the sense of covered with tapestry embroidered with figures.' But this meaning seems to be far-fetched. The walls of the room might have been actually painted, for rural painting was an old device to decorate the walls.] His picture formed and grew—she

imagined that the picture of Lancelot appeared and grew more and more distinct before her eye, as she looked towards the wall,

L. 989. Peace to thee—*i.e.*, peace be to you. [Her father and brothers were very much concerned about her. They tried to console her, but she was beyond any verbal consolation.] With all calm—absolutely calm. [She answered with perfect calmness and did not betray the slightest sign of her deep grief.] so herself—*i.e.*, alone. [When they came to her, she appeared to be perfectly calm; but when she was alone, her heart was filled with deep anguish.]

Ll. 992-993. Death . . . called—it seemed to her that she heard the voice of death from a distance, calling to her like a friend through the gloom of night. She seemed to hear a voice calling her from the far-off fields; the voice was friendly and seemed to say, "come to me, come to me, you will get peace." The voice was the voice of death.

Ll. 993-994. The owls . . . her—the hootings of the owls filled her with superstitious misgivings; the melancholy hooting of the owls seemed to her to indicate something ominous. (The hooting of the owl is considered to be ominous or indicative of some evil in every country.) Wailing—moaning. Had power upon her—filled her heart with sadness.

L. 995. Sallow-rifted glooms—the gloom of the evening broken by patches of pale light (of the day that has disappeared). Sallow—pale yellow light.

L. 996. The moaning of the wind—the low melancholy sounds of winds; the rustling sounds of winds.

Ll. 994-996. She mixed . . . the winds—Her vague imaginings got mixed up as it were into a confused mass with the gathering gloom of the evening and with the low whistling of the wind. In other words,

she went on indulging in her sad imaginings as the evening wind whistled on and as the shadows of the evening deepened.

Paraphrase II. 982—96. So the girl sat alone in her tower. Even the shield of her Lancelot had disappeared; only her own useless handiwork, the empty covering, remaining behind. But she always seemed to hear his voice, always thought his image to be standing between her and the painted wall of her room. Then her father came and asked her softly to have comfort. She welcomed him without betraying any emotion and as her brothers came and prayed that God might give her peace of mind, she greeted them calmly. But when she was left alone. Death called her as it were from a distance through the gloom of the night with the voice of a friend; the screeching of the owl seemed to her to be ominous and her imaginings got confused with the whistling wind and the darkness of the evening partly broken by the pale light of the sunken sun.

L. 997. In those days—*i.e.*, in those days, when she was plunged in deep despair.

L. 998. The Song . . . Death—*i.e.*, the song concerning love and death.

L. 999. Sweetly make—compose sweet songs.

Gist of Elaine's song I don't know whether Love which is sweet, or Death which annihilates all pains of life, will seem sweeter to me. As I can not have my love, I'll follow Death.

L. 1000. Though given in vain—though not returned, though frustrated. [Love itself is sweet, though it may be frustrated. Cp.

“ ‘Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.”]

L. 1001. Sweet is death—death also is sweet, for it puts an end to all pains and sufferings.

L. 1002. I know not—I do not which of the two—love and death—is sweeter.

Ll. 1003—1004. Love thou art sweet....to her—If love is sweet, then death which annihilates love within the human heart must be bitter. But if love is bitter and painful, then death, which puts an end to this pain, must be sweet. [For Elaine love is bitter and painful; hence to her death is sweet. Nothing is more pathetic than this song, in which Elaine expresses the deepest sorrow of her heart in the simplest language.]

L. 1005. If death be sweeter—if death is sweeter than love (for death puts an end to the sufferings of love), then let me die.

Ll. 1006—1009. Sweet love.....no, not I—My heart prompts me to believe, that love cannot be short-lasting; it has got something eternal in it. Death again which seems sweet to me, reduces our physical body into clay, devoid of all feeling, even of love. So, I am at a loss to understand which will be sweeter for me—love, or death. [Death, it is true, puts an end to the pains and sufferings of love, but at the same it makes as insensate clay. How then can it be preferable to love, which is eternal? Elaine cannot say which is better—death or love.]

L. 1006. That seems not made etc.—that does not appear to be fleeting and transitory: Elaine feels in her heart of hearts that love is deathless and eternal.

L. 1007. Loveless clay—death reduces us to dust and deprives us of the capacity of love. (Mark the antithesis: love is *deathless*, and death makes ^a *loveless* clay.)

L. 1010. Needs—necessarily (because my love is not returned.)

L. 1009—10. I fain would follow.....for me—if I were fortunate in love, I certainly would have lived and followed the promptings of my love; but since it cannot be, I must follow death. As I am disappointed in love, I must necessarily die, for I am already hearing the clear call of death. [If love had smiled upon me, I would follow love; but as love has nothing but bitterness for me, I must die, for death will end my pains and sufferings.]

Paraphrase of the song. Ll. 1000—1011. Sincere love is sweet though it may not be returned. Death is sweet too; it kills all anguish of the heart. I don't know which is sweeter of the two.

If love is sweet, death must be painful indeed. But since love is cruel to me, death must be sweet, (for it will put an end to the pains of love.) O Love, I would like to die if death gives me relief.

Sweet love does not seem to be fleeting or transient; death on the other hand reduces us to dust and deprives us of the capacity to love; I don't know, therefore, which of the two is sweeter—death or love.

I would gladly pursue love, if I were fortunate in love. But as I am disappointed in love, I must follow death who is beckoning to me. O death, call me, I'll follow you and die.

N. B.—Elaine maintains an apparent calm, but she broods and broods over her frustrated love. She pours out her grief in a sweet pathetic song which clearly indicates that she is presently going to die. It is impossible for her to live without love.

[Stopford Brooke justly says, "The song is almost like a piece out of the Sonnets of Shakespere, full of his to-and-fro play with words that are thoughts; with the same kind of all-pervading emotion in the lines; the same truth to the situation and the character of the singer; and with Tennyson's deep-seated waters of love—which too rarely come to the surface—welling upwards in it."]

Ll. 1012-1054. *The last line of the song, which she sang in a loud shrill voice, reached the ears of her father and brothers, and they ran to her tower thinking this shrill sound to be a supernatural shriek. There she asked her brothers to allow her corpse to drift up the river during high tide so that she might reach King Arthur's palace where all and among them Lancelot, the King and the Queen, might look at her dead body and pity her lot.*

L. 1012. High—to a high pitch. Scaled—reached. This—obj. of the verb 'heard' in l. 1014. [As she sang the last line of the song, her voice rose to a high pitch.]

L. 1013. All in a fiery dawning—one early morning, when the sky was red with flaming clouds (on account of the crimson rays of the rising sun falling upon them.) Dawning—the gerund form has been used partly for exigency of metre, partly for the sake of alliteration or repetition of 'n' sound.

Ll. 1013-1014. Wild with wind..tower—i.e., the morning was very windy so that Elaine's tower seemed to be shaking in the tumultuous storm.

L. 1015. With shuddering—trembling in fear. Phantom—spectre; spirit. Hark the Phantom of the house—listen to the voice of the apparition, which haunts our house. (It was believed in former times that some houses were haunted by spirits and appar-

tions who gave warnings of impending calamity or death by various portents (*e. g.*, by the hooting of an owl or by stormy wind or by a loud shriek.)

L. 1016. That ever . . . death—that always wails in this way before any member of the family dies.

L. 1017. All three—the father and the two brothers of Elaine hurried to her tower in fear and dread.

L. 1018-1019. The blood red . . . face—the crimson rays of the rising sun, red as blood, shone on her countenance. Flared on—lit up.

L. 1019. She shrilling—while she was singing in a shrill voice ('absolute construction'). The adjective 'shril' has been used as a verb here by poetic license.

Paraphrase Ll. 1012-1019. With the last line of the song her voice reached a high pitch, and this was heard by her brothers one day very early in the morning—a morning that, though resplendent with the crimson rays of the rising sun, was shaken by tempestuous wind. They thought trembling in fear, "This must be the voice of the spectre of our house that always shrieks in this way before a death takes place in the family." They called their father and they three hastened to Elaine in fear; and, lo, the dark crimson light of the morning shone on her face as she sang in a shrill voice, "Let me die!"

L. 1020. Dwell upon—keep our attention fixed upon: continuously think over: A word we know—a word with which we are very familiar.

L. 1020. Becomes a wonder—seems to be a wonderful thing. [The meaning of a word becomes a thing of secondary importance; the sound of the word—its pronunciation and accent—makes us

fondly linger over it, and we are surprised at its beauty, melody and significance. Tennyson the poetic artist must have revolved over and over in his mind the words that he used in his poems, and repeated them to himself to weigh their musical effects. Some words which are very familiar to us and which we use most carelessly, may be full of great beauty and melody, and we can understand it if we repeat them to ourselves for sometime]. And we know not why—the construction is: we know not why it becomes a wonder; we can not explain why the familiar word becomes a marvel of beauty and melody.

Explanation Ll. 1020-1024. As when we dwell... Is this Elaine—Elaine's father and her two brothers hastened to her chamber when her shrill song reached their ears. The old men looked upon the familiar face of her daughter and was filled with wonder to see the change that had come over it.

In order to describe the wonder of Elaine's father the poet makes use of a simile and says that when we continuously think over a common and familiar word and go on repeating it in our mind, it impresses and amazes us with something much more than its meaning; its very sound reveals to us a mystery which we did not notice before, but we can not explain it. Similarly, as the father of Elaine intently looked on her familiar face he was struck with the mysterious change that had taken place in it and wondered within himself, "Is this girl really my daughter Elaine"? [There was an altered expression in the face of Elaine, and as the old man looked at the face closely and intently, it appeared to be strange to him, and he doubted whether she was really his daughter Elaine.]

L. 1025. Languid—weak, listless. Gave a languid hand—extended her feeble hands to greet them..

L. 1026. Still—silent or quiet. With her eyes—i.e., with her looks and not with her lips. [She greeted them with the silent looks of her eyes].

L. 1028. Curious—strange. Little maid—i.e., just a young girl.

L. 1029. When we dwelt etc.—the reference is to the time when the Lord of Astolat had to leave his place to live in “a boatman’s hut” in the forest. [See ll. 276—277.]

L. 1030. Ye—you. With the flood—during the full tide.

L. 1031. Up—towards the source of the river. The great river—i.e., the Themes.

L. 1032. The cape—the bend of the river where one of the banks has projected far into the water.

L. 1033. That has....it—the promontory that is thickly overgrown with poplar trees. Fixt—fixed.

L. 1034. Limit—the utmost distance to which you would take me; i.e., you would not take me beyond that point. Oft.....tide—often coming back with the ebb-tide.

L. 1035. Cried—wept. [Elaine used to cry because her brothers would not take her to the king’s palace.]

L. 1036. Up the shining flood—up the sparkling stream. [Note the difference between the two expressions—up the stream and down the stream ; the former means ‘towards the source of the stream’ and the latter means ‘towards the mouth of the stream.’]

L. 1037. Found—reached. The King—King Arthur.

L. 1038. Would not—*i.e.*, would not pass.

L. 1039. All alone—alone by myself only. The flood—the river.

L. 1040. How... will—how I shall be able to do what I desired for a long time: [that is, I shall now go up to the palace of the King.]

L. 1041 There—at this point in the dream. The wish—*i.e.*, to go to the palace of the King. Still the wish remained—but I still had the desire to go up to the King's palace.

L. 1042. Let me hence—*i.e.*, allow me to go from here: (she means her corpse to be allowed to be taken to King Arthur's palace after her death as she later explains in ll. 1109—1122.)

L. 1045. And no... me—As I go in their midst no one will be impudent enough to jeer at me that I was too humble a girl to love so great a personage as Lancelot. By my supreme sacrifice I am going to command their respect.

L. 1047. Fine—good-looking. Will wonder at me—will wonder that I should die so soon.

L. 1048. Muse at me—think about me; think of me with sorrow and regret, because he proved so rude at the time of his departure. Coldly—without any cordiality. One—a single farewell. [Elaine recollects with deep regret that Lancelot had not said good bye to her when he left Astolat.]

L. 1052. Will pity me—will feel compassion for me, will be filled with sorrow when she will hear my sad story. Gentle court—the gentle courtiers. Voyage—her journey is called voyage because her corps^e will move along the river current.

Paraphrase ll. 1020—1054. As when we think over a word that is familiar to us and go on repeat.

ing it to ourselves till it amazes us and we don't know why it does so, so Elaine's father looked intently on her face and mused "Is this girl my Elaine?" She fell prostrate on the bed and stretched her weak hands--to her brothers and looked a silent welcome to them as she lay there. She at length began "Dear brothers, last night I imagined I was an eager little child again, and I felt in my dream as happy as I was when we lived in the forest and when you used to take me in the boatman's boat up the river during flood tide. But you never went beyond the spot where a bank projects itself into the water, forming a sort of cape, which is thickly over grown with poplar trees. That was your limit and you used to come back during the ebb-tide. And I used cry because you would not go up the glittering river to King Arthur's palace. But you would not proceed further. But last night I dreamt that I was entirely alone on the river and I said to myself, "I shall now gain my heart's desire." Just at this point I woke up but my wish remained. So please allow me to go from here that I may at last pass beyond the poplar covered cape far up the river till I reach the King's palace. There I shall be amidst all the courtiers ; none of whom will be impudent enough to jeer at me. There Gawaine, who bade innumerable adieus to me will be amazed to see me, and there also, the noble Sir Lancelot who discourteously went away without bidding me a single farewell, will brood wonderingly at seeing me. And there, King Arthur will know about me and the story of my love, and the queen will express sympathy for my tragic fate. All the courteous knights there will welcome me and I shall at last take my final rest after my long journey.

N. B.—Elaine, a sentimental girl, whose one passion is love, desires that her corpse be allowed

after her death to be carried in a boat to King Arthur's palace where her great love for Lancelot might be appreciated and pitied by all.

L. 1055—1077. *Sir Torre voies revenge on Lancelot.* Elaine's father also says that Lancelot is a mean fellow and hence unfit to be loved by her as he is known to be carrying on a secret love affair with the queen.

L. 1055. Peace—be quiet.

L. 1056. Light-headed—giddy; unbalanced. You seem light-headed—it seems your mind is unbalanced and you are talking nonsense. Force—strength.

L. 1056—1057. What force... . . . being sick—since you are sick, you cannot possibly go so far.

L. 1058. This proud fellow—*i.e.*, Lancelot. Scorns—looks down upon.

L. 1057—1058 Look on—care for. [Sir Lancelot is proud and looks upon us with contempt. You should therefore cease to think of him].

L. 1059 Rough—blunt: rude. To heave—to pant (with rage). Move—move about restlessly in anger.

L. 1060. Bluster—to rage furiously; to talk angrily. Stormy—violent, passionate. Bluster into stormy sobs—talk angrily with violent outbursts of passion.

L. 1061. An—if.

L. 1062. I care not—I do not care however great he may be. Strike at him—attack him.

L. 1063. Strike him down—I shall throw him down by striking him.

L. 1064. Give me good fortune—*i. e.*, may God give me luck; or if I am lucky.

L. 1065. Discomfort—sorrow; injury. Done—done to, [Sir Torre is so angry with Lancelot, partly because he has broken Elaine's heart, and partly because he is jealous of him].

L. 1067. Fret not—don't be worried. Fret—chafe; vex. Wroth—angry.

L. 1068—1070. Her argument in these lines is as follows:— Just as she is not to blame for loving Lancelot whom she considers to be the greatest of men, so Lancelot cannot be blamed for not loving her, for love is an affair of the heart and cannot be forced.

L. 1069. It is mine—*i. e.*, it is my fault. Just as it is not my fault that I love Sir Lancelot, so it is not his fault that he does not love me].

L. 1070. Who—the word refers to 'him' not to 'men.'

L. 1071. Highest—do you call Sir Lancelot the highest man? Echoing—repeating the words used by her.

L. 1072. To break.....her—to cure Elaine's love for Lancelot.

L. 1075. In open shame—openly indulging in this shameful passion; he does not make a secret of his illicit love.

L. 1077. If this.....low—if this is greatness, I don't know what meanness would mean; if this adultery with the queen be called greatness, then there would nothing mean or base in this world.

Paraphrase Ll. 1055—1072. 'Be quiet my child' said her father, 'you seem to be raving. you are ill and you are not strong enough to go so far? And why should you care for this proud man who looks down upon us all ? '

Then the blunt Sir Torre began to pant restlessly and burst into the violent sobs and angry passions, "I could not never like this man. If I happen to come across him, I will attack him however great he may be, and throw him down by my blow. And if I am lucky I shall even kill him for this injury that he has done to our family."

To him the gentle Elaine replied in this manner 'Don't chafe, my dear, nor be angry, as you should understand that Lancelot is no more to blame for not loving me than I am for loving him whom I consider the greatest of men.'

Her father said, 'You call Lancelot the greatest of men': (the old man wanted to cure her of her passion for Lancelot): 'daughter, I cannot understand whom you call the greatest man: I know this much—and all the people know it—that Lancelot loves the queen openly and shamelessly, and the queen also loves him openly and shamelessly. If this is what you call 'high and great,' there is nothing in this world which can be called mean and base.'

N. B. Elaine's father tries to cure Elaine of her passion by showing that her love reposed in one who is unworthy of it. But her love was far too deep and sincere to be so easily extinguished. She would rather die than believe in the bad rumours regarding Lancelot's relations with the queen. For, if she believed in Lancelot's faults that would be another tragedy for the poor girl: nothing gives one so much pain as when one's ideal is smashed to the ground.

LI. 1078-1093. *The lily maid told her father that every noble man was spoken ill of, and that she could die sooner, than believe in the slanders about Lancelot.*

Paraphrase.—When she heard of Lancelot's illicit connection with the queen, the lily maid said to her father, I am so weak and sick that I cannot even get angry at these false and malicious reports about Lancelot. Noble men are very often spoken ill of, and in order to make friends with some it is but necessary to make enemies of others. But so far as I am concerned, I am proud to be able to love one who has no equal and whose character is spotless. How so ever I may seem to you father, I am not really so unhappy as I appear to be. Though my love has not been requited, atleast I have got the consolation to say that I love one who is the best and the greatest man in the world. I thank you, father, for your desire to see me live, But you act just in contradiction to your desire, because if I could believe the malicious reports against Lancelot, I would only hasten my death. It is better there fore, you to stop here and call the ugly priest here to absolve me of my sin.

L. 1079-1080. All too faint and sick I am for anger I am so weak and sick that I can hardly get angry.

L. 1080. Slander—Malicious reports circulated to defame anybody.

L. 1081. Ignoble—mean ; base.

L. 1082. He makes . a foe:—In order that one may make friends of some, it is but natural that he should have some enemies too.

L. 1084. Peerless :—matchless, unequalled. Stain :—spot ; ill-repute. Let me pass :—let me pass into the other world i.e., die.

L. 1085. All—altogether. God's best —the best of all persons created on earth by God : hence the best man, Lancelot.

L. 1087. *My love had no return*—Lancelot did not return my love.

L. 1089. *You work against your own desire*—you want that I should live but you act in a manner that hastens my death. By speaking ill of Lancelot you hasten my death.

L. 1092. *The ghostly man*:—the spiritual guide, the priest. Shakespeare, too, has used “ghostly” in this sense. In the book of Common Prayer. We find “by the ministry of God’s holy word he may receive the benefit absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice.”

L. 1093. *Shrive me clean*:—grant me absolution by getting from me a frank confession of the sin committed by me. [*Shrive*—from Latin. *Scribere*, to write, to impose penance for sin]

Ll. 1094-1101. *With a mind light and pure after the confession to the priest she asked Lavaine to write at her dictation a letter to Lancelot.*

Paraphrase. After the priest had gone and she had got absolution from him. She requested Lavaine to write out a letter for her exactly as she dictated. Lavaine asked whether it was for Lancelot and said that he would gladly bear that letter, if it was addressed to him. She replied that the letter was for Lancelot, the queen and everybody else in the world.

L. 1094 *Come and gone*—come to Elaine, and departed after having absolved her of her sins.

L. 1095. *Bright as for sin forgiven*:—happy looking because she believed that her sins were pardoned after her confession.

L. 1096 *Besought*—requested. *Devised*—planned that is, dictated.

Ll. 1101-1122. *She begged of her father the indulgence of another ichim of hers.* She asked him to put

that letter into her hand after her death and send her richly decked to the court of the queen.

Paraphrase. Lavaine wrote the letter according as she dictated, and now she craved the indulgence of being allowed another whim of hers. "Oh loving father," she said, "you have never refused to grant me anything. This wish, my last one, however strange. I hope, will also be granted by you. Fold this letter into my hand, and when I am dead take this little bed of mine richly decked to the queen, the beloved of LanceLOT. Then decorate my body with all the riches I have in my possession and take my body to the river on a bier. Let me embark on a big boat all covered in black and go to the queen's court in all pomp and show. There under the circumstances, I am sure I shall be able to speak for myself much better than any one of you can. So none need accompany me except our dumb old man. He can row well and will be able to take me to the palace all right.

L. 1110. *Then he wrote* :—obviously in this line of Tennyson is traceable an influence of Malory. See XVIII 19 —

And when the letter was written word by word as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead. And while my body is hot, let this letter be put into my right hand . . . let me be in a fair bed with all the richest clothes I have about me," etc. etc.

L. 1103. *Tender and true* :—affectionate and sincere.

L. 1105. *Denied my fancies*—refused to grant any of my whimsical desires. *Fancies*—whims.

L. 1107. A little ere I die—shortly before my death.

L. 1108. I shall guard....death—I shall not let it go out of my hand even after I am dead.

L. 1109. And when... heart—some time after I am dead.

L. 1110. Died for Lancelot's love—died of a broken heart because Lancelot had not returned my love.

L. 1112. Like the Queen's for richness—as richly and splendidly as the bed of the queen herself.

L. 1114. Chariot bier—A carriage for conveying the dead body to the grave.

L. 1115. Barge—a vessel or boat elegantly fitted up and decorated, used on occasions of state and pomp.

L. 1116. Clothed in black—covered up in black clothes, as a sign of sorrow.

L. 1117. In state—with due pomp and dignity.

L. 1120. Our dumb old man—this man would merely take the boat to the place. But Elaine would be her own pleader. Her dead body and the letter, which would be placed in her hand would tell the story of her love more effectively than any one else could have done.

LI 1122—1129. *Her father had thought her idea of death to be merely fantastic. But falsifying all his expectations she died after ten days, and all Astolat mourned for her.*

Paraphrase. She stopped now, and her father promised that he would grant her last desire. At this she looked so merry and cheerful that her father and brother were led to think that her idea of dying soon

✓ was merely fantastic ; actually she was not going to die so early. But their expectations were frustrated. On the eleventh morning after that, her father put the letter into her hand and she breathed her last. As a result of her death all Astolat sank in grief.

L. 1123. Ceased--stopped talking. Whereupon —at which.

L. 1124. Deemed—considered.

L. 1125. Fantasy—fancy.

Explanation. They deemed... blood—she looked so happy and cheerful to know that her last desire would be fulfilled by her father, that her father and brothers were led to think that her belief regarding her death was merely fanciful, and not due to actual sickness of the body.

L. 1129. Dole—grief. (Line 1126 gives us an example of classical restraint exercised by Tennyson. The line, though simple, conveys adequately this idea of deep and universal mourning.)

Ll. 1130—1145. *The two brothers accompanied the chariot-bier to the river side where the dumb old man sat. She was placed on a black silken bed in the vessel, and they parted with farewell kisses.*

Paraphrase. With the dawn of the next day the two brothers accompanied the chariot-bier to the river side with bowed heads, sad as a shadow, in the summer season through the fields. The vessel all covered in black silk was waiting there, and the faithful dumb servant stood on the deck of it with his face all shrunk in sorrow. The two brothers took the dead body of Elaine to the deck, placed her on her bed, put into her hand a lily as a sign of purity (because she was called lily maid and had died a virgin). Then with profuse tears in their eyes-

they bade her farewell with parting kisses on her brows and departed.

L. 1130. Brake—broke; (an archaic use.) Brake from underground—appeared on the horizon i.e., the day dawned.

L. 1131. Bent brows—heads down cast on account of sorrow.

L. 1133. Like a shadow—dark and silent like a shadow. Shone full summer—This phrase gives us an evidence of the time of the year the poet is speaking about. The fields were glowing with the bright flowers of summer.

L. 1135. Palled—shrouded; covered. Samite—a rich silk material interwoven with gold or silver thread.

L. 1136. The life long creature—the man who served the family all his life.

L. 1137. Servitor—servant.

L. 1138. Twisted all his face—his face all wrinkled and contorted on account of old age and sorrow.

L. 1141. A lily—she was the pure 'lily' maid—hence a lily was put in her hand.

L. 1142 Braided—woven; embroidered. Blazonings—armorial bearings. The silken . . . blazonings—the silken case which she had made for Lancelot's shield and which had been elaborately embroidered.

L. 1143. Quiet brows—the brows that were calm and quiet in death.

L. 1145. Parted all in tears—left her weeping. All in tears—thoroughly bathed in tears.

L. 1146—1154. *The dumb old servant rowed the barge. Even in her death Elaine looked very beautiful; in fact she did not appear as one dead.*

Paraphrase. Then the dumb old servant got up and rowed the barge upwards. Elaine held a lily in her right hand as an emblem of purity and in her left she had the letter and all her golden hair came down in curls. The covering of the cloth of gold shrouded her upto the waist: and she herself was covered up in white dress and above all, her lovely and well defined face shone brightly. She did not appear as dead, but with a smile on her lips she lay like one fast asleep.

L. 1147. Oared—rowed by means of 'oar. The dead oared by the dumb—the dumb servant steered the boat, and thus the dead dumb Elaine was carried by the living dumb servant.

L. 1149. Streaming down—coming down thickly and in curls.

L. 1150. Coverlid—bed over.

L. 1151 Drawn to her waist—pulled back to cover her up to the waist.

L. 1151. She herselfface—her body was covered with white cloth—her face only was left exposed.

L. 1152. Clear featured—well defined ; clear cut.

L. 1153. She did not seem etc.—she did not appear to be death; she looked quite fresh and it appered that she lay smiling there.

L. 1155—1159. *That day Sir Lancelot went to Guinevere to present to her the jewels he had won after a long and deadly fight. The Queen felt pretty nervous and her frame shook perceptibly.*

Paraphrase. In order to present to Guinevere the jewels which were as valuable as half of the kingdom itself and which he had won after an ardu-

ous and deadly fight lasting over nine years. Sir Lancelot sought that day an interview with the queen. He communicated his desire of getting an interview with her through one of the servants of palace and the queen agreed. But she received the message with such a calm and stately dignity that it was easy to take her for her statue. The servant out of a feeling of loyalty and reverence, bent as low as almost to kiss her feet : but as he did so he could detect the shadow of a piece of pointed lace in the Queen's dress quivering on the wall. [This betrayed the under current of a nervous feeling that the queen was carefully trying to suppress.] Like a courtier that he was, he departed laughing in his heart.

L. 1155. Craved audience of—sought an interview with.

L. 1158. Hard won and hardly won—which took an arduous toil to win and which was recovered almost from the point of being lost. (This is an excellent example of the play on words sometimes resorted to by Tennyson). Hard—with difficulty. Hardly—scarcely.

L. 1159. With deaths of others—won at the cost of so many lives. Almost his own—Lancelot himself was almost killed *i.e.*, seriously wounded in the attempt to win the diamonds.

L. 1160 Nine-years-fought-for—for which he had to fight for nine long years.

Explanation (ll. 1155—1160) That day... . . . diamonds - One day Sir Lancelot came to the palace and begged for an interview with Guinevere. The object of this interview was to present to her some diamonds which he had won after fighting hard for nine long years. These diamonds, moreover, were as valuable as half the kingdom of the Queen, and had

cost the lives of many. Lancelot himself had to get many serious wounds before he could recover them almost from the verge of loss. His life had many times been in danger on their account.

L. 1161. One of her house—one of the servants of her palace perhaps.

L. 1162. Bearing his wish—bearing his request ; carrying his message.

L. 1163. Unmoved a majesty--calm and stately dignity.

L. 1164. She might have.... statue—she stood so calm and quiet before Lancelot that she could easily have been taken for a lifeless statue of the queen.

L. 1165. Low drooping—bending low.

L. 1166. Loyal awc—feelings of loyalty and reverence. With a side long eye—looking sideways ; looking askance.

L. 1167. Pointed lace—fine lace.

L. 1168. Vibrate—quiver ; tremble.

Ll. 1167-1168. The shadow... .vibrate—The quivering of the shadow of the Queen's robes on the wall showed obviously that she had not been able to hide her agitated feelings then.

L. 1169. Courtly—well-verses in the ways of the court. [The servant, who was thoroughly experienced in the ways of the court understood that the queen was deeply agitated and that she could not suppress it in spite of her apparent calmness. Thus he fully realised the situation of the queen, laughed secretly to himself and departed quietly, leaving Lancelot with her]

Ll. 1170—1181. *Lancelot offered to the Queen the jewels he had won as a token of homage to her unique beauty.*

Paraphrase. By the side of a window that was all covered with vines and that projected from the palace of Arthur towards the stream, Lancelot and the Queen met one day. Lancelot fell down on her knees and said : "Oh Queen ! my lady and mistress, who is the source of all my joy in life, make me happy by accepting from my hands the jewels which I have won for none else but you. Make an armlet of these for your hands which are the roundest and hence most beautiful on earth. Or make of them a necklace for your neck, compared with which the white neck of a swan looks dark, darker even than the dusky down of the Swan's young cygnet shows against the white of the swan. These words of mine are not adequate to describe your exquisite beauty, which, by itself is its own comparison. It is a sin on my part to try to describe it. Words are imperfect and inadequate vehicle of my admiration, yet let me utter them in the same way as one shed tears to express grief.

L. 1170. *Oriel*—A projecting window: from Latin *Oriolum*, a recess or small inner chamber. Summer side—southern side.

L. 1171. *Vine-clad*—covered with vine.

L. 1173. *Liege*—overlord; mistress.

L. 1174. *Which I had..for you—which I should never have won but that I wished to present them to you.* To which the Swan's .. cygnets—"compared with which the white neck of a swan looks dark, darker than the dusky down of the swan's young cygnet shows against the white of the swan."

L. 1178 *Cygnet*—a young swan. *Tawiner*—darker But these are words—But all the words that I may say, fail to describe your beauty.

L. 1179. Your beauty is your beauty—there is nothing in the world with which your beauty can be compared : no word can describe your beauty ; its only description is that it is your beauty.

Ll. 1179—1180. And I sin in speaking—It is wrong on my part to try to describe your beauty in words. Yet O grief tears—Although words are an imperfect and inadequate vehicle of my admiration for your beauty, yet let me utter them just as we allow grief to utter itself in silent and dumb tears. Grant my worship of it—please allow me to express my admiration of your beauty in words.

Ll. 1181—1189. Rumours are afloat that I loved the Maid of Astolat and that my loyalty towards you had been slackened. But I hope your inherent nobility would prevent you from believing it.

Paraphrase. But this inadequate expression of our feelings is excusable. But flying rumours are heard in your court that I had begun to love the maid of Astolat and thereby had slackened the bond between you and I of eternal faithfulness. This bond, just because you and I are not married should be, I believe, all the more close and strong. Well, I do not mind if such rumours are afloat, because it is but natural. But because I know you have faith in my nobleness of spirit as much as I have in yours, I am confident that you do not believe in these rumours.

L 1181. Such sin etc —The sin of having imperfect and inadequate vehicle of expressing our real feelings. (We can excuse this defect in each other —our failure to express our feelings fully in words)

L. 1183. Rumours—that Lancelot loved the Queen of Astolat and had given up the worship Queen. Flying—circulating ; spreading.

L. 1184. Bond—union; i.e., the marriage bond.

L. 1185. Absoluter—more complete. Trust—faith (in each other's love and affection.)

L. 1186. Make up—compensate. Defect—lack: the want of legal bond and sanction.

L. 1184—1186. As not the bond..... defect—‘Since our bond is not as indissoluble as the bond between those who are married, we should make up for the absence of a legal union by a closer and stronger union of affection and confidence in each other's faithfulness.’

L. 1187. Let rumours be—I do not care for those rumours: such rumours are always there in this world.

L. 1187—1188. These—i.e., these rumours. As I trust that you trust—I am confident that you do not believe in these rumours of my unfaithfulness to you, because I trust that your innate nobility of spirit would disdain to think so unworthily of me.

L. 1188. You trust me....nobleness—you trust out of your own nobility in my faith and loyalty to you.

L. 1189—1196. The queen received these words with an apparent coldness, but her attitude suggested that a tempest of passion had been raging within her and that she had with great effort kept her nervous excitement under control.

Paraphrase. While Lancelot spoke thus, the queen expressed her displeasure at the words by turning aside and not facing him direct. She tore leaf after leaf from the vine that shaded the window till the floor was all covered with them, then, after Lancelot had finished speaking, she received the gems from the hands of Lancelot and laid them aside on a table near her.

Half turned away—this refers to the queen, who partially turned away her face while Lancelot was speaking to him. This clearly showed that she was highly displeased.

L. 1191. Break etc.—This act of breaking of leaves shows that the queen was trying to control her excitement. A tempest of passion was raging in her mind and she must need do something to relieve herself. Vast oriel-embowering vine—the big cluster of vine covering the window all about. [She was tearing the leaves of the vine and was throwing them about till the floor on which she stood was covered with green leaves.]

L. 1194. Ceased—finished. In one cold passive hand—in an indifferent and half-hearted manner. Received at once—"made only a single movement of hand in taking and putting away" i.e., laid aside as soon as she took.

L. 1297—1335. *The queen accuses Lancelot of disloyalty to her, and says that the jewels have not been won for her but for his new lady love who must be more beautiful than she is. What he is saying to her is mere courtesy, so it would be better if their connection were ceased.*

Paraphrase. The queen said, "It is just possible that I may be led to believe things more easily than you think I am. Although our connection is illicit and therefore bad, there is at least one good in it. It can be broken more easily than a connection legalised by regular wedlock. For the last so many years I have been true to one whom I considered noble in spirit, even in spite of many wrongs. I do not believe that these diamonds have been won for me by you. I would have attached to them thrice their intrinsic value, if only you had not been disloyal to me. All

true hearts would value a gift not by its intrinsic worth but according to the worth of the giver. So these presents, I am sure, are not really won for me, but for the Maid of Astol in whom you took Fancy of late. So at least you grant me one favour. Let me not be a witness to the pleasure that you derive in the company of your new love-queen. You have changed a good deal in your attitude towards me but this I must admit that you do not yet fail to do what courtesy demands on an occasion. And I too do not like to go beyond that circle and limit of decency and decorum which binds me as the queen of Arthur. So better it is for us to put an end to this meeting and our connection. Such an ending of our relations would be strange and quite unforeseen. Yet I would accept it without any hesitation. So I pray let these diamonds which you present to me add to the ornaments of the Maid of Astolat. Tell her that she beats me in beauty decidedly. As compared with hers, my arm is too ugly to bear them, and my neck much less fair for the necklace that would deck her.

'There was a time when you were true to me, and as a virtuous woman I was placed much above these jewels. No, these jewels will be hers not mine. Or let them be hers or mine I shall do as I please now—I will not let her have them.'

L 1197. It may be—it is possible. Quicker of belief than etc.—you say I can not easily believe in the rumours afloat. But it is just possible I might be led to believe on things more easily than you think I am.

L 1199. Explanation. Our bond is not.... easier—our relations are not legalised by marriage, and whatsoever evil there may exist in them, there is

at least one good in them and that is that our connection can be broken more easily just because it is not strengthened by wedlock.

L. 1201-3. *I for you . . . nobler*—It is for your sake that I have done considerable injury and wrong to my husband, whom I have always considered nobler than you in my heart of hearts. Despite—scorn Wrong—injury. One—*i.e.*, Arthur.

L. 1204. *Had you . . . own*—if you had not lost your own worth by proving faithless to me.

L. 1205 1206. *They had been . . . your own*—these diamonds that you present to me would have been three times more valuable if you had not lost faith to me. You have lost your own worth and so your gifts have lost their worth.

L. 1207. *Loyal*—true

L. 1208. *Vary*—change. The giver's—*i.e.*, the giver's value or worth. *To loyal hearts . . . giver's*—A true person estimates a gift not by its monetary value but by the worth of the giver is its value changes with the worth of the giver, If he is worthy, the gift is valuable's, if not, it is worthless.

L. 1209. *For your new fancy*—The maid of Astolat to whom you have taken fancy of late; your new love—Elaine. [Give these diamonds to your new love, Elaine—I won't have them.]

L. 1210. *Have your joys apart*—you enjoy the love of your new fancy's queen—the maid of Astolat. But please go away far from here so that I may not have to see you and your love.

L. 1211-1212. *I doubt not . . . graceful*—though you have changed a lot in your heart, I am sure you have not lost your sense of courtesy and so I hope

you will not pain me by enjoying your new love
here in the court.

L. 1213-1214. Would shun.....rule—As for myself I too do not like to go beyond that limit of decency which is imposed upon me by virtue of my being Arthur's queen—i.e., I would behave courteously with you like the queen that I am and would not reproach you in any way. Would shun ... courtesy—would not violate the laws of courtesy [so far as to tell you how mean your conduct has been to me].

L. 1215. Cannot speak my mind—cannot express myself frankly. An end to this—Let us put an end to our connections.

L. 1216. A strange one—This sudden parling is a bit strange and unforeseen; nevertheless I accept it without demur. Amen—(Latin) so be it (generally said at the end of a prayer). I take it with Amen—I accept this with good grace.

L. 1217. My diamonds—the diamonds you have presented to me. Her pearls—the queen had heard of "the red sleeve broidered with pearls" Elaine's favour—which Lancelot had worn on his helmet.

L. 1218. Deck her with these—adorn her with these diamonds. Shines me down—out shines me: excels me in beauty.

L. 1219-1220. An armlet... haggard—for the arm of the maid of Astolat compared with which the arm of the queen is ugly and shrunken. The queen here refers to the passionate praise of her own beauty by Lancelot, and mockingly hints that he would be quite ready to pay similar compliments to his new love, Elaine]. Haggard—chivelled; thin.

L. 1221. As a faith—"She abruptly turns the comparison from herself in order to aim another blow at

L. 1227. Flung—threw. Casement—window. Down they flashed—as they fell down, they committed a bright lustre. Smote the stream—fell into the river.

L. 1228. From the smitten surface—from the surface of the river, when the diamonds fell into it. Flashed—glittered·sparkled. Diamonds—bright drops of water glittering in the sunlight. Flashed diamonds to meet them—when the diamonds fell into the water, bright drops of water were splashed up. Then from the smitten surface, .meet them—the drop of water splashed up by the falling gems and glittered in the sun light like diamonds.

L. 1230. Disdain—disgust : hatred. The accusation of Guinevere that he was faithless and disloyal, when he was in fact faithful and loyal only to her went like iron into his soul and he was disgusted with life, love, everything in the world.

L. 1231. Window ledge—the base of the window.

L. 1235. Like a star in the blackest night—As beautiful as a star that shines brightly through the darkness of the night. [Elaine's face seemed to smile and her beauty shone like a star in a dark night].

Ll. 1236—1251. *The barge oared by that dumb man reached the palace gate, and those who kept the gate took it for something enchanted that had come to take their King Arthur to fairyland.*

Paraphrase —The queen who had been wounded at heart and consequently highly perturbed in mind, did not see the barge. She went away hastily to mourn and weep in private. The barge came sliding and stopped in front of the palace gate. The two sentinels who guarded the gate all armed were soon joined by a crowd of folk open-mouthed and open-eyed with wonder, ranged one above the other in stairs like spectators in an amphitheatre. Every body

wondered as to what the barge was and who the occupants were. The ugly face of the Oarsman that resembled one carved by a sculptor out of stone, terrified them all, and they began to doubt that the boat was a magic one and that the occupants were not human beings. They had come to take their King Arthur to fairyland, because it was heard that Arthur would not die but would go to the fairyland at the end of his life.

L. 1236. Wild—wild with rage: angry. Burst away—went away hastily. Wail—lament; bemoan her fate. In private—the dignified queen would not show her sorrow to any body, not even to Lancelot.

L. 1238. Sliding—moving quietly. Door way—gate.

L. 1239. Two stood—two sentinels were guarding the door.

L. 1240. Tire above tier—row upon row

L. 1241. To whom . . . gaped—the two sentinels at the gate were joined by several others who wondered as to who the occupants of the barge were and why they had come at all. Tier over tier—rows of men were ranged one over another.

L. 1241. Mouths that gaped—persons whose mouths opened wide in astonishment. Eyes that asked—persons with enquiring eyes or looks. [They all seeme to ask what it was].

L. 1242. Haggard—wild looking.

L. 1243—1244. As hard . . . cliff side—the face of the old man was as stern and calm as that which we fancy among broken rocks on a hill side. [Sometimes the broken rocks on the hill side present the apperance of a human face: the face of the dumb man looked as haid and wild as that stony face,

which seem to see in the broken rocks on the hill-side].

L. 1245. Appalled—dismayed; terrified.

L. 1245. Enchanted—under magic shell.

L. 1247. How she sleeps—Elaine looked so fresh that she actually appeared to be sleeping. The Fairy Queen—she was as beautiful as the Fairy Queen.

L. 1248 But how pale—but beautiful as she was she looked pale. What are they—who is this dumb fellow, and who is this lady? Flesh and blood—*i.e.*, human beings; are they living human beings?

L. 1249. Or come to take—has the Fairy Queen herself come to take King Arthur to the fairy land.

L. 1250. Hold—believe. Cannot die—used to think of Arthur; just as he was not born but came mysteriously, so he would not die but will pass into the fairy land after his earthly career. “He passes, and is healed and cannot die.”

L. 1253—1263. *In the meanwhile King Arthur appeared on the scene and asked the fairy corpse to be borne into the hall. There he found a letter in her still hands.*

Paraphrase.—While the sentinels talked all sense and nonsense about the barge and its occupants, King Arthur came up to the place surrounded by his Knights, and made the dumb Oarsman look at him face to face. He bade him bring the lily maid into the hall. He then asked two of his knights, Sir Galahad and Sir Percival to lift up the corpse, and they brought her into the palace with due respect. One by one came Sir Gawain. Lancelot and the queen herself and all began to wonder at her, when to the surprise of King Arthur detected a letter in the still hands of the maid. He broke the seal and read it thus.

L. 1252. Babbled—talked idly.

L. 1253. Girt with—surroundedly. Tongueless—dumb.

Ll. 1253—1254. Turned the tongueless man.... doors—the dumb Oarsman, looked at him face to face, and asked him by hints to take her into the hall.

L. 1256. The meek Sir Percival—"He is the first of all the Round Table Knights to hear the story of the Grail, and is first to swear, after its veiled appearance to the assembled Knights at Camelot, to follow in quest of it" He is called meek because of his unspoilt chastity and high character.

L. 1257. Sir Galahad—"The maiden knight" represented by Tennyson as the type of stainless purity. He wore white armour. He was the only one of the Knights who saw the Grail at its first appearance at Camelot and who fully achieved the quest."

L. 1260. Mu^{ed} at her—wandered at her. [These lines are repetitions of ll. 1047 and 1048 : the poet points at that Elaine's expectations have been fulfilled].

L. 1262. Spied—saw.

Ll. 1264—1274. So the letter ran thus:—Oh Sir Lancelot of the Lake, I come here to take my last farewell of you. I loved you once, but my love was not requited. So you pray for my soul as well as you Lady Guinevere, my queen.

Paraphrase The letter ran thus: I, who during her life time was called the maid of Astolat, have come here after death to bid you my last farewell, because you did not bid me adieu when you came. I make no secret of the fact that I loved you once, even though you did not requite it. And this is why

the failure of my true love has brought about my death. Therefore, my lady Guinevere and other mourn for me and give me a burial. You too pray for my soul, Sir Lancelot, because you are so noble and of matchless gallantry.

L. 1265. Sometime—formerly.

Ll. 1265—1267. I sometime called....of you—I have come to bid my last farewell to you, because you left me without any greeting or farewell.

L. 1268. My love had no return—you did not return my love.

L. 1269. My true love has been my death—My love for you was sincere and deep; and so I am dying because my love was not requited.

L. 1271. Make moan—lament; express my sorrow.

L. 1272. Yield me burial—bury me. Yeild—grant.

L. 1274. Peerless—matchless, unequalled.

L. 1275-1279. As the lords and the ladies read the letter, they were touched at the words, and shed profuse tears.

Paraphrase. As the lords and the ladies heard the letter, they looked from the faces of Arthur, who read the letter at times at the face of the Maid of Astolat that lay mute. They were so much touched at the words that they thought as if the lips of the Maid of Astolat who had devised the letter moved again.

L. 1275. Ever in the reading—many times while the letter was being read.

L. 1277. Which lay so silent—which was mute on account of death.

L. 1276-1277. Looking often etc.—they often looked from the face of Arthur, who was reading the letter, to the calm and silent face of Elaine.

L. 1278. Touched—moved. Half-thanking—almost thinking. They were deeply moved to hear the letter that they almost thought that the lips of Elaine were moving again and were narrating the story of her disappointed love.

L. 1280-1297. *Sir Lancelot said, "I am really sad at the death of this maid. I gave her no reasons to love me still her love for me, though unrequited, was deep and genuine.*

Paraphrase. Then Sir Lancelot spoke out without any hesitation, ‘My lord and master Arthur, and all of you who hear, know that I am very much grieved at the death of this maid, because, she was a good and very sincere maid whose love for me, though unrequited, was peerless in the world. But the love of one is not sufficient to make the other love too, specially for me. Who has passed the impulses of youth.

I swear by truth and by the honour of my knighthood that I did not give her any cause or occasion for loving me willingly. How her brothers and father requested me to be rough and unemotional to her, and how, acceding to their request, I treated her discourteously can be testified to by my friends. I did not even take leave of her when I came back. But I would surely have devised some other sterner plan to break her passion for me, if only I had known she would do.

L. 1280. Freely—unhesitating; frankly.

L. 1283. Right heavy—very much aggrieved. True—sincere.

L. 1284—1285. But loved.....woman—Her love for me was fearless,—no other woman of acquaintance could have loved so deeply and sincerely as she did.

L. 1286. Yet to be.....again—but the love of one rouse the love of another: even when one is deeply loved, it does not love that he will return the love.

L. 1287. Not at my years—atleast not for a man of my age, when all the illusions and enthusiasms of youth have past away. However it hold in youth—however true it may be in youth that true love is always required.

L. 1286—1287. Yet to be loved....youth—True love is not always returned; it may be so in youth, when that mind is full of idealistic enthusiasm but at the ripe age of Lancelot it cannot be said that one loves when he is truly and sincerely loved by another.

L. 1289. No cause—I did not in any way encourage the passion; at least I did not do anything intentionally to arouse her passion.

L. 1290. Call.....testimony—ask my friend to bear witness to the truth of my statement.

L. 1291. Her brothren and her father—case in opposition with ‘friends.’ Besought — requested ; begged.

L. 1293. Break her passions etc—By rough treatment to make her mind and heart disinclined towards me; to cure her of her passion by harsh and rough behaviour. Blunt—rough. Courtesy—rudeness.

L. 1295. Against my nature—which is contrary to my nature. Lancelot was courteous by nature

and hence to be rude to anybody was against his nature.

L. 1297. Put my wits etc —devised some kind of plan or other to help her to conquer her weakness about me Helped her from herself—made her conquer her increasing passion for me and thus saved her from this untimely death.

Ll. 1294—1295. What I could I did.....from herself—Lancelot felt deeply aggrieved at the death of Elaine; but he was not to blame for it He did not encourage her passion in any way but did all that he could to cure her of her passion. In fact he did what was quite contrary to his nature—he had behaved in a rude and discourteous manner: he had lett her without a greeting or farewell. But if he had dreamt that she would die for his love. he would have devised plan to cure her of her passion and thus save her from this untimely death.

Ll. 1295—1314. *The queen said that Lancelot could atleast have saved her from her death. At this Lancelot replied that she could not be satisfied with anything else but marriage with him, which was impossible.*

Paraphrase. The queen was now calm than before just as the waters of the sea are terribly calm after a storm had passed over them, in the same way her mind too was placed after her anger had passed away. She said, you ought to have been courteous enough to devise some plan by which her death could have been averted." At these words of the queen Lancolot raised his head and his chiding (because just a few moments ago she had been furiously jealous of her) eyes met the queen's, she could not bear them and so had to cast down her own.

Lancelot said, "she would not be satisfied with anything but marriage with me which was impossible.

She asked my permission to accompany or follow me wherever I go from one corner of the world to the other and that too was not possible. I told her that her love for me was of romantic youth and hence of transitory character. It was not steady and deep-seated, and would wane gradually in favour of one who is better fitted for her. Then, if she happened to marry a poor youth this would furnish them with rich lands and property so that they may pass their days in all round happiness. This, I said, was the most that I could do; nothing else beyond this was possible. But she would not agree to these and hence she died.

L. 1299. She was her wrath—her wrath was like the sea; just as the sea assumes a terrible appearance during a storm, so the queen was terrible when she was filled with wrath. Yet working after storm—even, now her mind was not quite calm. Just as the sea continues to be rough sometimes after the storm, so her mind was still agitated though the storm of her anger had blown over.

Explanation. Sea was.....storm—Just as the waters of the sea continue to be rough after fierce storm has passed over them, in the same way the mind of the queen was still in a state of intense agitation, though her anger had cooled down.

L. 1300. Grace—courtesy. [You might have done some courtesy to her, which might save her from death].

L. 1302. Hers fell—her eyes fell down (in shame) She was now conscious of the injustice, she had done to Lancelot, and so she could look straight at him.

L. 1304. Save that I wedded her—nothing short of marriage would satisfy her. Which could not be—which was impossible for me. [The queen of course understood why it was impossible].

L. 1307. Flash of youth—fierce but momentary passion of youth, as contrasted with the more sober, deep seated and steady love of riper years. Darken down—extinguish; pass off.

L. 1308. Stiller flame—more steady light.

L. 1307—1309. Would darken.....of her—As time passes her passion for me would pass off, and be succeeded by a more steady love for another who would be better fitted for her than I am. [The "flesh of youth" is here contrasted with the "stiller flame" of riper years. Just as a flash is momentary, so the passion of youth is short-lasting; and the love of riper years is as steady as a fixed light].

L. 1310. He, she wedded—the man whom she married.

L. 1311. Estate them....joyance—endow them (the maid of Astolat and her husband, if he be poor) with land and property lying beyond the narrow seas and thus enable them to live happily for the whole life. Narrow seas—referring to the English channel. Joyance—joy; happiness.

L. 1314. I could not—I could not do anything more. Would not—and this she would not accept.

Paraphrase. Ll. 1315—1318. After Lancelot had stopped, King Arthur said to Lancelot, "O Knight, it will not only be an honour to you, as my knight, but also to me, the head of my Round Table, to see that the maid of Astolat is buried with due honour and courtesy. To thy worship—to your honour. Worshipfully—honourably.

Ll. 1319—1344. The lily maid was buried with queenly grandeur and ceremony. The queen, finding Lancelot very sad, came near and begged his forgiveness for being jealous in love.

Paraphrase. To that tomb which was the most gorgeous in kingdom was led the burial procession by Arthur himself and the Knights of his Round Table. Lancelot was very sad to see that the maid was not buried as an ordinary, insignificant woman; but with all the dignity befitting a queen—the funeral rites, the mass and the funeral music and dirge. After the beautiful body of the maid had been buried by the side of many of the kings of olden days, King Arthur said: “Let her tomb be rich and costly and on it be carved her image with a lily in her hand and the shield of Lancelot at her feet. Let the sad and heart-rending story of how she undertook the voyage dead be carved on it in golden and azure words of all sincere lovers of the world.” All these things were actually done, and when the rich and the poor, the high and the low who had gone along with the procession to the burial place began to come back in a disorderly fashion, the queen came near Lancelot and said: “Lancelot, please forgive me for what I had said to you. They were all due to jealousy that my love for you gave rise to.”

Lancelot answered with his head bent down. “Jealousy is the worst thing, love produces. However I have no hesitation in forgiving you, so you may pass on satisfied.”

But Arthur who had not failed to detect the sad appearance of Lancelot drew near him and said,

L. 1319. That shrine etc.—Westminster Abbey. The Westminster Abbey was the richest Abbey in the country.

L. 1321. Marshalled—drawn up or arranged in a proper order. Order of their Round Table—the Knight of the Round Table.

L. 1322 Sad beyond his wont—unusually sad ; Lancelot was of a happy and cheerful nature, but on this occasion, he appeared to be very sad.

L. 1323 Not as one unknown—not as an obscure person. Meanly—in a poor style.

L. 1324 Gorgeous—splendid. Obsequies—funeral rites. Not as one unknown etc.—Elaine was to be buried not as an obscure person, but with great pomp and ostentation like a queen.

L. 1325. Mass—religious service ; Eucharist. Rolling music—grand music (of the organ). [Her funeral would be accompanied by grand music and celebration of the Eucharist].

L. 1326. Laid—put. Comely—beautiful.

L. 1327. Half forgotten Kings — Westminster Abbey is on the site of a Christian Temple built by Sebert, king of the west Saxons at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Some authorities mention that a more ancient church was built there by king Lucius. abt 184 A. D Sebert's buildings gave place to that of Edward the Confessor, which in its turn was pulled down and rebuilt in a different style by Henry III. The half-forgotten king of ages previous to Arthur's era were ancient legendary kings supposed to have been buried there. Low in the dustkings—when Elaine's body was laid beside the graves of ancient kings, whose names were almost forgotten.

L. 1329. And her image thereupon—*i. e.*.. and let her statue erected upon her tomb be also a costly one.

L. 1331. Carven—carried (an archaism), Lily—denoting her purity.

L. 1332. Dolorous—sad and mournful because she had undertaken the voyage when dead.

L. 1333. Blazoned—proclaimed. For all true hearts—let all persons, whose hearts are true and faithful read the sad story of her voyage with pity and sympathy.

L. 1334. In letters gold and azure—in golden and blue letters. These two colours are significant for they denote purity and faith—and these were the two prominent qualities of Elaine, which was wrought thereafter—all this—the erection of the tomb, statue etc.—was done afterwards.

L. 1335. Streaming from the high door—coming out of the high gate of the Abbey.

L. 1336. Disorderly—not in the order in which they had followed the bier, but each making his own way homeward.

L. 1338. Where he moved apart—where he was going alone.

L. 1339. Drew near—approached him. Sighed in parsing—while she parsed, she sighed, she did not stop to talk to him, lest her conduct should arouse suspicion.

L. 1240. Forgive me—The queen now realises that she has done a grave injustice to Lancelot by suspecting his love, and so she now begs him to pardon her. Jealousy in love—jealousy due to my deep love for you; my suspicion was due entirely to my love. [Because I love you, my suspicious were easily excited by the rumours of your love-affair at Astolat].

L. 1341. With his eye upon the ground—Lancelot did not look up—the sad end of Elaine filled his heart with deep grief.

L. 1342. That is love's course—this is the poison of love: jealousy is the poison that embitters and last destroys love. Forgiven—pardoned. [Lance-

lot asks the queen to pass on, because if she stops, her conduct would give rise to suspicion. He however forgives her, though the queen has given him sufficient cause of offence by doubting his loyalty and sincerity].

L. 1343. Beheld—saw. Cloudy—gloomy : darkened with the clouds of sorrow and gloom. Cloudy brows—gloomy face ; sorrowful countenance.

L. 1344. With full affection—Arthur felt that Lancelot was deeply aggrieved owing to the sad death of Elaine; and so in order to sympathise with him, he addressed him with great affection.

Ll. 1345—1362. *Arthur sympathises with Lancelot and says that he would have been very happy if he could have loved the pure and beautiful Elaine*

Paraphrase. Arthur said, " my dear friend Lancelot, I take the greatest delight in your company and repose my best confidence in you. I know what you have been to me ; you have fought many a battle by my side. Many a time have I seen you beat strong and experienced knights in jousts, and let go young and saw heroes to make their names. You are a man really to be loved by all. But the sorrow which is apparent in your eyes pains me to think that it would have been much better, if you could have loved this maid. It seems as if she had been made only for you—she is so fair, she is so pure. It is just possible that through her you, who are homeless and heirless, could have had noble issues to continue the line of your bravery and nobility of character.

L. 1345. Affiance—confidence ; trust, (used in Shakespearian sense).

Ll. 1345-1346. Thou in whom in affiance—you are my dearest friend, in whose company I enjoy the

greatest delight, and in whom I repose my best confidence.

L. 1347. What thou hast etc.—what great help you have rendered me in battle. [You have rendered me invaluable assistance in battles].

L. 1348. Many a time—often. Watched—observed. At the tilt—in tournaments ; in jousts.

L. 1349. Strike down—throw down. Lusty—strong and vigorous. Long practised—veteran ; experienced.

L. 1350. Unskilled in—experienced. Let the younger....go by—allow the young knights to have a chance. [Lancelot would challenge only the veteran knights : but would knight and give every opportunity to young knights to distinguish themselves].

L. 1352. And loved—*i. e.*, and I have loved. Courtesies—polite behaviour ; courteous manners. [I have always loved you and your polite manners].

L. 1353. A man made to be loved—*i.e.*, a man made by God to be loved ; a man endowed with such qualities that every one, who comes in touch with him, loves him. I would to God—I wish God had so decreed.

L. 1354. The homeless trouble—the feelings of sorrow and loneliness in one who has no home of his own. Seeing the homeless....eye—seeing that you feel so lonely and desolate ; [there is a look of loneliness and sorrow in your eye, so I wish you had loved and married Elaine].

L. 1355-1356. Shaped it seems etc.—made by God for you. [Elaine seems to have been specially made by God to be your wife]. From her face—judging from her face.

L. 1357. If one may . . . dead—(a parenthesis) : if it is possible to judge the worth of a person when alive, by looking at his or his dead face. [The dead face of Elaine looked so fair and pure, and judging from it I can say that she was exceedingly pure and beautiful when she was alive]

L. 1358. Thou couldst etc—the construction is : I would to god than couldst have loved etc ruction I wish you could have loved this maiden, who seemed to have been made for you.

L. 1358 Delicately . . . fair—exceedingly pure and beautiful.

L. 1359. Brought thee—borne to you.

L. 1360 Noble issue—noble children.

L. 1361 Sons born to the glory. . . fame—sons who would have worthily maintained the fame and glory of your name.

Ll. 1353-1362 But now I would to God . . . Lancelot of the Lake—you my dear Lancelot is a lovely man, and your life is joyless. I wish for your sake that it was possible for you to love and marry this maiden, who seemed to have been designed for you by God. And if it is possible to judge of one's worth by looking at one's dead face. I can confidently say that this maiden was exceedingly pure and beautiful. If you had married her, she would have made you happy and brought forth worthy sons to maintain the form and glory of your great name.

Ll. 1363-1368. *Lancelot answered that it was not possible, for love was free and could not be forced.*

Paraphrase Then Lancelot replied that the maid of Astolat was very fair and as pure as he wished his ideal knight to be. Nobody would doubt and

question her beauty only if, he is not blind and lacking in the capacity of appreciating beauty. Nobody who has heart would question her purity. Yet love is always free, and one cannot be compelled to love merely by the considerations of worth.

L. 1334. Pure as you ever etc—She was as pure as you would wish your knights to be. [Arthur wanted his knights of the Round Table to be pure and chaste: hence Lancelot says that Elaine was as pure as Arthur wished his knights to be].

L. 1365. To doubt her fairness—to doubt that she was beautiful; to say that she was not beautiful. To want an eye—to lack the power of seeing. To doubt her fairness etc.—one would be blind indeed to say that she is not beautiful.

L. 1366. To want a heart—to lack the capacity of knowing the right from wrong. To doubt her pureness....a heart—if any body doubted her purity he would only show that he lacked the faculty to distinguish right from wrong: that is to say, any body with a true heart would not doubt her purity.

L. 1361. Yea to be loved—yes, she was most worthy to be loved. What is worthy love—what deserves to be loved.

L. 1362. Could bind him—could compel his love. If what is worthy love could bind him—if more merit or worth could compel love: 'him' refer to love.

L. 1368. Free--spontaneous: voluntary. Will not be bound—can not be forced. Free love cannot be bound—Love is spontaneous and cannot be forced. Love is a spontaneous feeling of the heart and cannot be compelled by considerations of merit or worth.

Ll 1657-1368. Yea to be loved . . . be bound—Lancelot says to Arthur that Elaine was indeed "

fair and pure maiden and was worthy of love, if merit or worth could induce it. But love, he adds, is a spontaneous feeling and cannot be compelled by considerations of worth or merit.

Ll. 1363-1375. *Lore is freest ichen it is bound only to what is noble.*

Paraphrase. Love is freest when it is bouned to what is noble and pure ; love should certainly be free, but free in the sense that it should be free from base and ignoble desires. The pure love of so beautiful a maid is the best thing on the mortal earth to be desired for after heaven. Though, I know, you are gentle and unattached to any body, and so it is rather strange that this beautiful maid failed to win your life.

L 1369. So bound—i.e., bound to what is pure and good. Free love . . . freest—of course love is free and spontaneous but it is freest only when it is bound to what is good and pure ; that is, when one loves what is pure and good, then only love is freest i.e., free from evil impulses and desires.

L. 1370. Let love be free—let love be free from impure and ignoble desires (Mark how Arthur uses the expression 'free love' in different sense. Lancelot means by 'free love,' the spontaneous feeling of love, which comes of itself : where as Arthur takes it in the sense of 'love that is free from evil desires.) Free love is for the best—it is when love is free for ignoble desires it chooses what is best and purest.

L. 1371. After heaven—next to the hopes of heavenly bliss. On our dull side of death—in this earthly life. Dull—gross (as compared to heavenly life.)

L. 1372. What should be best—*e.i.*, nothing is better (on this earth) than the pure love of such a pure maiden.

L. 1372-1373. So Pure a love dothed...loveliness—So pure a love in such a pure and beautiful maiden. Clothed—embodied.

Ll. 1370-1373. Let love be free...loveliness—In reply to Lancelot's words that love is free and cannot be compelled by consideration of worth, Arthur points out that love is really free when it is free from unholy desires and that such love always chooses what is noble and good. And in this world next only to the hopes of heaven, there is nothing better than the love of such a pure and lovely maiden as Elaine. Hence King Arthur suggests that if Lancelot's love were really free, he would certainly have loved Elaine, for free love always chooses what is good, and there is nothing in the world better or purer than Elaine.

L. 1374. Yet—nevertheless : in spite of this.

L. 1375. Bind—bind you : in spite of your love.

L. 1376. Unbound—unattached to any lady.
Aa I think ...as I know—mark the two expressions. 'As I think' goes with 'unbound' and 'as I know' goes with 'gentle'. Arthur knows that Lancelot is pure, but he merely *thinks* that Lancelot is as yet unattached to any lady. Arthur does not know for certain whether Lancelot is unattached to any body. [In these lines Arthur perhaps hints at the illicit relation of Lancelot and with the queen].

L. 1375-1877. Yet thee ...know—it is rather strange that such a pure and beautiful maiden Elaine could not win your love, though you are gentle and do not love any body.

Li. 1377—1418. Jist—Lancelot groaned in remorseful pain over his life that appeared to him to be futile and barren. Automatically there was suggested to his mind a comparison between the jealous love of the queen and the simple and selfless love of the lily maid of which the latter was sweeter, and so he could not but pray for the soul of the departed. Yet he found that it was not possible for him to be free from the love of the queen, unless of course she herself freed her.

Paraphrase. Without any reply to the words of Arthur Lancelot went away and sat at a place where a little brook flowed into the river and watched the weeds moving to and fro by the winds passing over them. He saw from a distance that boat which had borne the dead body of the lily maid from Astolat. It looked as small as a speck on the stream. He began to murmur to himself: Oh simple and beautiful lily maid, your love for me surely was much more sweet and tender than the queen's. You have asked me to pray for your soul, Oh surely I will. So fair well, dear lily, farewell, may your soul rest in peace. Taking for granted that the jealousy of the queen proceeded from her love, does not show that her love is daily decreasing? I do not know and I myself cannot account for the fact why King Arthur spoke so much on my glory and name. I am however ashamed of it and the whole of my life seems like a reproach to me I was taken away from the arms of my mother by the Lady Lake—the wonderful lady, whom I see in my dreams at night,—who brought me up as her own son. She used to sing mysterious songs to me and caress me saying, 'You are as handsome as a king's son.' She used to carry one in her arms, while she walked on the surface of the lake. I wish she had drowned me in that lake, where-

ever it may be. What am I ? I have achieved fame and glory no doubt ; but what does my name avail to me ? It does not give me any joy, but it would surely cause me pain if I lose it because it has grown, as it were, a part of my life now. But, after all, what is its use will corrupt the people by lending to them justification for their sins ; my sin will appear less to them because of my greatness. It is a matter of great regret that being the greatest knight of King Arthur I could not reach Arthur's ideal of Arthur's knighthood. My illicit connection with the queen has brought ill-fame to me, hence it is advisable that I should break it soon. Shall I be able to break this connection, even if she wished ? Who knows. But If I am not able to do so, then let God send an angel down on Earth to pull me by my hair into that dark and ignoble abyss of hell where all good acquired by men are interred with their bones." Thus moaned Sir Lancelot with a heavy and remorseful heart. But he did not know then that he was to take to orders soon and die a holy man.

L. 1376. Answered nothing—the conscience of Lancelot was roused when he heard the words of Arthur. Besides, he could not say why it was not possible for him to love such a pure and beautiful maiden as Elaine.

L. 1377. At the in running etc.—at a place where a little brook ran and flowed into the river.

L. 1378. Cave—recess ; a sheltered place.

L. 1379. Watched the high reed wave—saw the high reeds moving by the wind. *Reed* is a kind of plant that grows at the brink of a river or lake.

L. 1380. Barge—the boat that had brought Elaine. Moving down—going down stream towards Astolat.

(When the boat came from Astolat, it was moving up-stream ; now it was going towards Astolat, and was moving down-stream).

L. 1381. Far off—at a great distance. A blot upon the stream—the boat was so far off that it looked like a mere spot on the surface of the river.

L. 1382. Said low in himself—murmured to himself. Simple heart—an apostrophe to Elaine, who was so simple, innocent and lovely.

L. 1383. Damsel—maiden. With a love..... queen—your love for me was sweeter than that of the queen. [The queen's love was selfish, and she insulted Lancelot as soon as she suspected him ; Elaine's love was pure and unselfish. and she never believed in any bad report about Lancelot though Lancelot did not return her love]. Pray for thy soul—Elaine in her letter had requested him to pray for her soul. Lancelot remembers and says that he would certainly do it.

L. 1385 That will Ay—yes. That will I—I certainly pray for you. Fare well too now at last—Lancelot remembers that he had not said farewell to Elaine while leaving Astolat. Now he will make up that omission and bids the last farewell to her. Now at last—now when you are dead.

L. 1386. Jealousy in love ?—Lancelot's thought suddenly pass on to Guinevere, he remembers the words said by Guinevere to justify her rude and insulting treatment of Lancelot. She has apologised to him by saying that her conduct was due to her jealousy in love. Lancelot doubts whether it is really jealousy that springs from love.

L. 1387. Not rather dead love's etc.—constr. Is it not rather dead love's etc. Harsh heir—that which remains after love is dead. Jealous pride—

jealousy which is due to pride. [Though Guinevere's love was dead, yet she, out of her pride, could not endure the thought of Lancelot loving another woman : thus her jealousy was not due to her love, (which was now dead), but due to her pride. And this 'jealous pride' takes possession of the heart when love dies]. Not rather...jealous pride Guinevere's conduct was not perhaps due to her jealousy in love: but it was due to her pride, which made her jealous about her lover. This jealous pride is called 'love's heir' because it takes possession of the heart when love dies.

L. 1383. Queen—now begins an apostrophe to the queen If I grant—if I assume a take for granted. Jealousy as of love—her jealousy as (arising out of) her love. If I grant love—if I assume that her jealous is due to her lover, and not to her pride.

L. 1389. Crescent—growing. Fear for name and fame—a fear of public opinion as regards her name and reputation.

L. 1390. Speak cf—show : point to. As it waxes—as you fear grows. Wanes—decreeses.

L. 1388—1390. Queen if I grant... that wanes? —O queen, even if I were to assume that your jealousy was due to your love for me, your increasing fear for your name and reputation clearly shows that your love for me is gradually cooling down. [The very fact that the queen is anxious about her name and reputation shows that her love for Lancelot is decreasing. If she loved Lancelot as ardently as before, she would not care for her reputation or position nor for public opinions].

L. 1391. Dwell on my name—speak of my glory and greatness. [Is it a fact that the king has any

suspicious about my guilt ?]. The king had referred to the name and glory of Lancelot in Ll. 1361—1362.

L. 1392. Shames me—feels me to shame; makes me feel ashamed. Reproach—disgrace: blot. My own name ..reproach—I am ashamed of my own name, for I have brought disgrace to it. [Lancelot is intensely conscious of his guilt and feels ashamed of himself. He has brought an indelible stain upon his name and cannot bear to think of his noble heritage.]

L. 1393-1400. Lancelot . . . mere. Lancelot's father King Pant and his queen (Lancelot's mother) were besieged in their castle by rebellious subjects, when Lancelot was carried away and left under a tree by a fairy who rose in a cloud of mist. She brought him up as her own son because she wanted to get her own son released from a giant through him. The lady, because she lived in an isle surrounded by high walls, and was called the *Lady of the Lake*, and her foster son was called Lancelot of the Lake.

L. 1394. Caught from his mother's arms—took from his arms of his mother in his childhood. The wonderous one—*i.e.*, the Lady of the Lake. Wonderous—wonderful.

L. 1395. Who horses....night—(the mysterious lady of the lake) who sometimes appears to me in the dreams at night.

L. 1396. Chanted—sang. Snatches—fragments: pieces. Mysterious Hymns—wonderful songs, the meanings of which were not clear.

L. 1397. Winding—moving in circles, or eddies. The Lady of the Lake, who lived in a lake and would sing songs that would be heard on the surface of the water. Ever and morn—evening and morning.

L. 1400. Bare—love: carried. Pacing—walking. There—lake. (she would take the child in her arms while she walked on the water of the lake). Dusky—dark.

L. 1401. Would—I wish. Would she had drawned—Lancelot was so sick of life that he wised that he had been drowned in his childhood. Where'er it be—Lancelot did not remember where the lake was situated.

L. 1402. For what am I?—(Lancelot wishes he had been drowned in the Lake—why?) What a miserable creature I am! Profits—evails.

L. 1403. I fought—I strove hard to win glory and have won it. But of what use is it to me? It does not give me any joy, a peace to my mind.

L. 1404. Pleasure....none—my great name which I have won by strenuous effort, does not bring any joy to my heart. [Why? Because Lancelot's life was a hell to him]. To lose it..pain—though the honour and glory which I enjoy do not give me any joy. Yet if I love them, I shall suffer great pains.

L. 1405. Now grown a part of me—I am so used to my fame and glory that I cannot think of being without them; I have grown so accustomed to fame and glory that I cannot exist without them. What use in it?—what do I gain by all this fame and glory? Life has lost all its attraction for Lancelot—for he is constantly smarting under the lash of his conscience; the sense of guilt which is ever present in his mind, cannot give him a moment's peace. His fame and honour are merely gall and worm wood to him; hence he exclaims, what is the use in it?

L. 1406. To make men worse . . . known—the construction is: The use of my fame and name will be to make men worse etc ; my name and fame will perhaps make men worse, for they will justify or palliate their sins by quoting the great name of Lancelot. They will justify their sins by saying that when a person like Lancelot can commit such sins, they need not be ashamed of them. Thus, the great name of Lancelot will lend justification to their sins.

L. 1407. Or sin seemless etc,—*i.e.*, or make seem sin less, the sinner seeming great ; or perhaps the people will make light of my sin in consideration of my greatness. Because the sinner (Lancelot) is a great person, his sin appear less in their eyes ; that is, Lancelot's sin will not appear to be so odious and horrible, in view of the fact that Lancelot, the sinner is a great person.

L. 1403—1407. I fought for it . . . seeming great? —Lancelot has grown sick of life, because of the ever present sense of guilt in his mind. He has achieved fame and glory no doubt by hard and strenuous fights, but he has no joy in his greatness, no pleasure in his glory. His soul is constantly tormented by his thoughts of sin, and hence he does not enjoy a moment's peace in life. Though his greatness does not bring any joy to his heart, yet he has grown so accustomed to his glory and greatness that he cannot live without them ; if he loses them, he will feel miserable. What, then, does his greatness avail to him ? Of what use it is to him. It does not do any good to him, but it will do an incalculable harm to the people in general. If his sin is known, the people will justify their own sins by quoting the great name of Lancelot ; because Lancelot is a great man, his sin will be leniently judged by the people,

and thus moral laxity will prevail in the country; and the people will indulge in corruptions under the shelter of my name.

L. 1418. Alas for Arthur's greatest knight—I am called the greatest knight of King Arthur, but it is a pity that I do not deserve the title. [Arthur's ideal of knighthood was perfect purity and chastity ; Lancelot is conscious of his guilt and realises that he, of all persons, is unfit to be called 'the greatest knight']

L. 1408—1409. A man not after Arthur's heart! I do not fulfil King Arthur's ideal of knighthood.

L. 1409. Needs—of necessity. Break—sever.

L. 1410. Bonds—ties (of illicit love that exist between one of the queen). Defame me—bring disgrace to my name. I needs must.... defame me—it is most necessary that I should end my connections with the queen, that bring such a disgrace to my name and fame.

L. 1410—1411. Not without ... wills it—but no, I cannot end the connection unless she (Guinevere) wishes it. Wills—wishes, desires [Lancelot knows Guinevere's power over him, and so he realises that he cannot possibly terminate his connection with her unless she allows it].

L. 1411. Would I, if she willed it—the construction is : would I break these bonds, (even) if she willed it? Shall I have the strength to end my connections with her even if she wished to do so. In a fit of noble resolution, Lancelot determines to cut his guilty connections with the queen, but the next moment, he recollects the charms of Guinevere and his passion asserts its sway over his mind. He is so infatuated that even if Guinevere wishes to put an end to her connection with him, he would

perhaps not be able to do so—it is not so easy, after all, to shake oneself free from the iron grip of passion].

L. 1412. Nay, who knows—*i.e.*, who knows whether I would be able to break these bonds? That is to say, probably I would not be able to end my connections with her. If I would not—if I do not wish to sever my guilty connections with her.

Ll. 1412-1415. If I would not ..mere—if I am not strong enough to cut off my guilty connections with the queen, then may God send an angel to seize me by the hair, carry me off from this place and throw me deep into that mysterious lake, where I was brought up in my childhood.

L. 1416. Tumbled fragments of halls—broken rocks.

L. 1417. Groaned—muttered in pain. Remorseful pain—the agony of heart, caused by repentance (for his sin).

L. 1418. Not knowing.... holy man—not knowing that he would pass the last days of his life in piety and die a life of a holy man. According to Malory 'Lancelot devoted himself to a life of penance and prayer in a hermitage, in his last days.' [Thus the essential nobility of Sir Lancelot at last asserted itself and saved him].

APPENDIX

Characters in Lancelot and Elaine

Lancelot. Sir Lancelot is the bravest of the knights of the Round Table. He has fought by Arthur's side and has always assisted his King in all his battles. In tournaments, he is without a rival; he has achieved victory after victory in nine successive tournaments and has won the prize every year. He is not only Arthur's greatest knight, but his friend and confidant. Arthur himself says,

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance."

With his qualities as a knight and warrior, he combines the accomplishments of the perfect courtier. He is the very mirror of courtesy and politeness. When he comes to Astolat, he behaves most gently with its rustic lord and never for a moment shows any arrogance and haughtiness. He treats Sir Lovaine as a friend and encourages him in his resolve to contest for the prize at the tournament at Camelot. His courtesy, gentleness, noble bearing and handsome appearance command respect wherever he goes; even when he is not known, he is respectfully received at Astolat, and at once marked out as one of the greatest knights of Arthur. The old lord of Astolat says,

"For by thy state
And presence, I might guess thee chief of them
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls
Though he is twice her age, he inspires love in the simple heart of Elaine; his face is marred indeed."

a constant conflict within his heart, but there is a dignity about his countenance, which evoked admiration in Lavaine and love in Elaine.

A true knight as he is, honour is the watchword of his life. That Arthur esteems and loves him as his dearest friend shows that he is a man of undoubted honour and rectitude. Even a fickle and unscrupulous man to the Sir gawaine hears testimony to Lancelot's honour and rectitude. His conduct toward Elaine is most honourable ; though he cannot return the love of the maiden, he treats her as a sister and is even prepared to lay down his life for her sake. He could easily take advantage of Elaine's simplicity (as we are quite sure Sir Gawaine would have done, if he were in Lancelot's place), but his conduct is irreproachable.

Lancelot is indeed a flower of knighthood, but one single blemish sorts his entire character. His guilty passion for the queen not only ruins his own life but also the life and life-work of his king and friend Arthur. Arthur loves him and trusts him absolutely, but he has repaid that trust and affection by establishing illicit connections with his wife. Nothing can excuse or even extenuate this guilty act of Lancelot; he has lost that purity of character, which according to Arthur, is the most essential quality of a knight. Lancelot is however intensely conscious of his guilt ; but he cannot overcome his weakness. Strong and firm in every other respect, he is extremely weak, so far as her attachment to the queen is concerned. He repents but is not strong enough to break with her. He hates all that is false and dishonourable ; but to hide his guilty love, he stoops to all sorts of tricks and falsehoods. This is the one great spot in his character.

Lancelot loves the queen with a violent passion, that is absolutely beyond his control. He realises his guilt ; he realises his baseness and ingratitude to Arthur. But still he cannot control himself ; he is carried along by the tremendous current of passion, which sweeps away his truth, his honour and his faith. He has the highest respect and esteem for King Arthur, and he feels most bitterly that he is playing false with the one man, he honours above all in this world. On the other hand, his sense of honour would not let him have Guinevere, after their guilty relations have been established. But he is not happy in her love either, because of the constant pricks of conscience. Thus, Lancelot's life is a hell, he is torn with remorse : the conflict between his faith to the king and his love for the queen does not give him a moments peace. And it is this passion for the queen that prevents him from returning the love of Elaine. Thus this guilty love of Lancelot not only ruins his own life but the life of Arthur, his king and also the life of the simple Elaine, who dies for his sake.

Character of Lancelot (Stopford Brooke).

Lancelot is Arthur's earliest and dearest friend. He and Arthur swear undying fealty to one another on the field of battle. On Lancelot's steadiness, since he is the greatest of the knights and has the largest clan, depend half the strength and enduringness of the Round Table. He has himself an unbroken admiration for the King, and pays him undiminished honour and affection from the beginning to the end. He never wavers in this faithfulness, which is the root of his character. But at one point he is unfaithful to Arthur. He loves Guinevere and takes her away from the King. There is a certain inevi-

tableness in this love, for which Tennyson allows, while he condemns the love. And there is an absolute faithfulness in it on both sides which keeps the characters noble, while the thing itself is represented as not noble. Lancelot the lover is a constant to Guinevere, as Lancelot the friend is to the King. But it is this double faithfulness that the pain and punishment of life in here—faithful to Arthur, but unfaithful at the dearest point ; faithful to Guinevere, but making her unfaithful at that central point of life in which the fate of her husband, of his work, and of his kingdom is contained.

This is a tragic position. Lancelot's fidelity to the king jars with his fidelity to Guinevere, and his life is sent to pieces between the two. Both are the deepest things in him, and both are at war in his heart. He is true to the King and true to the Queen, but his truth to the King makes him shrink from the Queen, and his truth to the Queen makes him shrink from the King. Tennyson puts this terrible position—terrible to the character he represents Lancelot to be—in the two well-known lines—

His honour rooted in dishonour stood
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

The battle in his soul comes to a crisis in the Idyll of *Lancelot and Elaine*. Arthur asks Lancelot if he will come to the jousts for the diamond. "No," he replies, for he thinks that the Queen wishes him to stay with her. "To blame, my Lord Lancelot," the queen says, when Arthur is gone. " You must go ; our knights and the crowd will murmur if you stay." "Are you so wise, my Queen ?" answers Lancelot, next that he must seem to have lied to the King, "once it was not so." But he obeys, and on his way to the jousts he meets Elaine, who loves him and who, being unloved by him, dies of her love. The Queen

is jealous, and her suspicion makes Lancelot realise the restlessness and misery of a life, which absolute trust between him and Guinevere alone can make endurable. Moreover, he is wronged by her jealousy and to be thus wronged in love by one we love, while it deepens love, make it seem for the time contemptible. He is thought to be untrue when he is conscious he is most true. And he despairs love, life and all things.

Then the King is sorry that his knight is unable to love—why could he not love this maiden? And the unsuspicuousness of the King makes Lancelot conscious of friendship failed and of honour lost. He is thought to be true when he knows he is most untrue. This is a double torture, and it is finely wrought out by Tennyson. It comes to a point of self-knowledge and self-abasement in his soliloquy, when leaving the Queen wrathful and Arthur sorrowing and surprised and the girl who loved and died for him in her grave, he sits thinking by the river and wishes that his life had never been. The lines in which he analyses his inmost soul, are equally plain and subtle, full of that curious truth with which a man, embittered for the moment, views himself. “For what am I? What profits etc.” It is the commonest cry of weakness in the unhappy hours of passion to ask the gods to work a miracle. But what the will does not will to do, the gods leave alone. **Arthur.**

King Arthur is represented by Tennyson as the perfect man, in whom “the higher instincts dominate the lower, and whole life is governed by the law within.” His aim is to establish perfect peace and happiness in the realm, and as peace and happiness are not attainable without purity and discipline, he has instituted a Round Table of Knights,

the ideal of which can be summed up in the two words, 'honour and purity.' King Arthur himself lives a life of exemplary purity and insists upon his knights for living pure and chaste lives. He is the very embodiment of truth and cannot speak falsehood under any circumstances. He is displeased with Lancelot simply because he had told him a falsehood. Arthur is simple, and trustful. Himself pure and truthful he never suspects that others will be false to him and play tricks with him. When the rumours of Lancelot's guilty intimacy with the queen have spread throughout the court, Arthur is without any suspicion ; he cannot believe that either his queen or his friend Lancelot, can be so false to him. Queen Guinevere cannot love him, but she is conscious of the greatness of her husband ; she says.

"Arthur, my lord Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?"

Indeed, King Arthur is like the sun in heaven—bright with his purity and truth. He is rather too pure for this world ; he lacks that warmth and humanity, which makes us love a man. We esteem and revere Arthur—but we cannot love him. This is why Guinevere cannot love him, though she is conscious of his greatness.

Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine.

The two sons of the Lord of Astolat are only barely outlined in the poem, for they do not perform any very important part in the action of the poem. Sir Torre is introduced thrice in the poem—and of all these occasions, he could be conveniently left out. First, we see him sulky and vexed for some reason. Sir Lavaine is just joking with him to cheer him up ; next, he takes Elaine to Camelot, and when they meet with Sir Lavaine, he departs; and then, when

Elaine is sick for Lancelot's love, Sir Torre expressses his hatred of Lancelot and brags of punishing him. Sir Torre thus appears to us a sullen young man, who has no high aspirations and who is jealous of greatness.

Sir Lavaine is a much more amiable youth than his brother. He has an ample fund of good spirits and a buoyant and optimistic nature. He has an infinite reverence for greatness ; when he hears that the unknown knight is no less a person than Sir Lancelot his heart is instantly filled with reverence, which is dear to true young heart than their own praise. Sir Lavaine is brave in fights and brings a horse for Lancelot after defeating a knight in the tournaent at Camelot. He faithfully serves Lancelot as long he is sick, and never joins in the accusations against Lancelot. In short, from the little that we see of Elaine, we think that Sir Lavain is worthy young man, brave, modest, bright, good and humoured. Elaine.

Elaine is one of the masterly studies of female character in literature. She embodies the softer traits of feminine character ; love and affection, obedience and tenderness, modesty, simplicity, innocence—these are the prominent characteristics of Elaine. And Tennyson has represented this character with such masterly touches that Elaine, a mere creation of the poetic imagination, appears to be invested with life. "In all his work, there is nothing truer to womanhood than this picture of Elaine ; and true to that moment of womanhood so difficult to represent, when the girl, suddenly touched by a great love, becomes the woman. This is a real woman ; not symbolic, but human. Her blood is eloquent upon her cheek ; she lives most keenly when she dies. Her movements are thoughts,

her thoughts are passions. Her dead body speaks. She is a true creation." (stopford Brooko). Who can think and not weep over the fate of Elaine? Bred in the simple and innocent atmosphere of a country home, she does not know any guile or feminine art. She is the very embodiment of innocence and simplicity. But she can perceive and admire greatness. The nobility and greatness of Lancelot at once capture the fancy and heart of this simple maiden. She does not know he is Lancelot: she sees merely the manly appearance, the dignified bearing, the noble courtesy of the great knight, and she loves him and loves with an intensity that increases more and more till she dies for her love. To her, love is life, and life is love; when her love is thwarted, she dies. The fair blossom of womanhood is blasted; the pure, simple girl is not fit for this cold, harsh world. If she had lived, she would have known of the illicit love of Lancelot, and her ideal—the noble ideal of her youthful enthusiasm—would have been smashed, and from this great anguish, she has been saved by death. Death therefore came like a boon to her, for it would have been a great tragedy if she had lost faith in Lancelot whom she loved with all the enthusiasm of youth.

Elaine is introduced in the poem just at the age, when a girl just passes from girlhood to womanhood. Her mind is then imbued with noble idealism; she then dwelling in the world of her own imagination; but his heart is still untouched; she has not yet felt that emotion, which, like a torrent, sweeps away all thoughts and fancies of the mind. When Lancelot comes incognito to her father's castle, one single glance is enough to shake her heart to its depth: a new emotion fills her breast; life takes on a different colouring, and all her maiden fantasies give way to

this irresistible passion. She loves Lancelot, but as she is innocent of all guile and feminine arts, she never attempts to conceal her love. She offers a red sleeve to Lancelot, who agrees to wear it in the tournament. The girl is satisfied: She thinks that she has won the love of the stranger knight. When she hears that Lancelot is wounded, she feels the sharp lance going into her own side: she actually groans with pain. She cannot remain at home, while her lord and lover requires careful nursing. She leaves home with her father's consent, and by tender nursing, she at last restores Lancelot to health. The sisterly affection which Lancelot shows is mistaken by her: and she thinks Lancelot may love her. And so when Lancelot declines to marry her, the whole world is a blank to her: there is no purpose in her life: without love has no meaning. Gradually she wastes away and at last dies.

Tender and soft as she is, she is strong in her love. She can snub Sir Gawaine into silence when the latter is making love to her. She is firm in her determination begs to nurse Lancelot in her sickness. While her father speaks of Lancelot's illicit intimacy with the queen, she sternly refuses to believe it, and expresses her faith in the honour and nobility of the great knight. Thus, the weak and the shy maiden becomes strong under the influence of love.

Elaine is shy and modest: but at the same time she is simple and innocent. She never makes any attempt to conceal her love: she allows Lancelot to see it: finally she compasses her love to him. She will be anything to him—if not his wife, to follow him as his servant:

"Your love," "she said, "your love—to be your wife."

And Lancelot answered: Had I chosen to wed

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine ;
But now there never will be wife of mine”
“No, no,” she cried, “I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro’ the world.”

This confession of love—this expression of her desire to be Lancelot’s wife might seem rather too bold and unmaidenly, if we did know that Elaine was extremely simple and innocent. What would be boldness in another, springs from innocence and simplicity in Elaine. She does not know any of those feminine arts, which women employ to win the hearts of men; she expresses frankly what she feels. And when we remember her overmastering emotion of love, her resolution to die if Lancelot does not love her, we can not but feel that her boldness is due to her frank innocence. And, in the presence of death, there is no convention or decorum; since she is convinced that she will die without her love, she need not observe any form or ceremony in the manner of expressing love.

Elaine’s love is selfless. She never thinks of herself—whether Lancelot loves her or not, she will love him. She does not care for herself when she nurses him; every day she comes to Lancelot’s abode from Camelot, and at last by her tender nursing she tends him into health. Even when Lancelot refuses to marry her, she never complains or murmurs;

“ It is no more Sir Lancelot’s fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest.”

Guinevere.

Guinevere, the queen of Arthur, of matchless beauty, Lancelot and is loved by him. When young, she threw herself recklessly into her love; but in

after years, she becomes more prudent and tries to keep her love-affair within bounds, so as not to rouse any suspicion. Lancelot the ardent lover does not like this prudence—he would have her as ardent and prudent as before. But Guinevere's love for Lancelot has cooled down ; and therefore she is now careful. She asks Lancelot to go to the tournament as not to give rise to any scandal. Her love has cooled down and so she has grown jealousy : jealous pride, 'dead love's harsh heir' occupies her heart, and she unjustly accuses Lancelot of unfaithfulness. On her fit of jealousy, she speaks "in the very hall of passion," and forgets that she is queen : she is a mere ordinary woman, without any "in-eleect, power or variety."

She tries to justify her passion for Lancelot on the plea that Arthur is merely 'passionless perfection'; he is cold and unemotional and is therefore incapable of human love :

" Arthur, my lord Arthur, the faultless King,
 That passionless perfection, my good lord,—
 But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven
 He is all fault who hath no fault at all;
 For who love me must have a touch of earth;
 The low sun makes the colour I am yours,
 Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond."

Thus, Guinevere justifies her infidelity to her husband ; she thinks herself and settles down in wrong. Because Arthur is pure and faultless, she has just grounds for being unfaithful. Curious argument ! But this is how sin excuses itself.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. 1. *Draw a contrast between Elaine and Guinevere.*

Ans. Elaine is an innocent, artless maiden, bred in the simple atmosphere of the country. She is ignorant of all feminine arts and is absolutely guileless and frank. She does not know the ways of the court and is wanting in those graces and accomplishments, which the court-ladies cultivate most elaborately. Elaine therefore is the very embodiment of simplicity and innocence ; she is so fresh and charming with her guileless frankness that even a blasé courtier like Sir Gawaine calls 'a wild flower.' When she loves, she loves deeply and frankly, and she never makes an attempt to conceal her love. When Lancelot declines to marry her, she does not complain or murmur ; she has not one word to say against him. She never loses her faith in him ; even when her father speaks ill of Lancelot, her confidence is not shaken in the least.

Guinevere on the otherhand, the queen of Arthur, is thoroughly experienced in the ways of the court. She is a thorough hypocrit ; she loves Lancelot secretly and tries to appear as the chaste wife of Arthur. She tells lies to Arthur and deceives him. Her life is one of falsehood and deceit. And the worst thing about her is that she does not admit even to herself that she is doing wrong ; she rather justifies her own conduct. Even the love that she bears towards is not pure ; it is a purely selfish passion. She abuses and insults Lancelot without any ground ; though she has ceased to love Lancelot, yet she desires to keep him bound to herself.

To contrast Elaine with Guinevere is to contrast the purity of heaven with hellish inequity and sin. If Elaine is the embodiment of innocence, Guinevere is embodiment of falsehood. She cannot brook a slander about Lancelot; Guinevere is sinning against Arthur every moment. Elaine's heart is radiant with purity; Guinevere's is blackened with the taint of sin.

Q. 2. Narrate in your words the circumstances of Elaine's death.

Ans. Elaine loved Lancelot to such an extent that she could not endure the thought of living without his love. When he declined to marry her, she received a shock proved too much for her. At that very moment, she fainted and had to be carried to her tower. Then she received another shock when Lancelot went away without her farewell. From that time, her condition grew from bad to worse. She constantly brooded over her misery and saw nothing but void and desolation before her. The song, that she sang about Love and Death, shows clearly that to her, death would really be a blessing, because it would save her from the deep anguish of her heart. She gradually wasted away; and only a few days before her death, she made a strange request to her, which was however fulfilled to the letter, she begged her father that her dead body with a letter put in her hand might be carried to the king's palace on a boat steered by the dumb servant of their house. The letter, dictated by her contained a pathetic description of her disappointed love. 'Ten days after she died.'

Q. 3. Describe in your own words the interview between Lancelot and Guinevere after the former's return from Astolat.

Ans. When Sir Gawaine returned to the court from Astolat, he spread the report that Lancelot was in love with Elaine. Guinevere grew wild with rage when she heard of the report, for she felt that Lancelot had proved false to him. She, the peerless queen loved him, and now he was discording her for a country-girl ; it was an insult to her dignity—an insult to her beauty—and above all an insult to her womanhood. But she could not do anything : she merely clattered her teeth in rage. But she never cared to find out whether the report was true.

When Lancelot came back from Astolat, he heard of the rumours that had been spread about him ; but he was confident that he would be able to dispel the suspicious of Guinever, if she had at all suspected him. So one day he begged for an interview with her. When Lancelot entered her room, the queen felt deeply agitated, but controlled herself with a great effort. Lancelot first offered to the nine diamonds which he had won in nine successive tournaments. There he went on to explain that the rumours in the court about him were unfounded and that they should trust each other more implicitly because they were not bound together by legal ties.

Guinovere, who was already wild with jealousy and rage, burst out with a terrible invective against Lancelot's infidelity. She was blind with anger, and without caring to know the truth about the matter, insulted Lancelot and accused him of baseness and infidelity. It was for his sake, the queen said, that she had proved false to her husband, who was a much better and nobler man than Lancelot ; and now Lancelot was repaying her for all her love and kindness by deserting her and loving another maiden. The diamonds had no value in her eyes, for the giver had proved false to her ; they should

rather be given to his new love. This thought of Lancelot's new love wearing these diamonds, made her wild with jealousy, and she threw the diamonds into the river below, where beat, carrying Elaine's dead body was slowly drifting up the river.

Q. 4 Give, in your own words, a summary of Lancelot soliloquy, and bring out the struggle in his soul.

Ans. After the death of Elaine, Lancelot sits alone by the river Thames and reviews his life. He feels pity for the girl who loved him and died for his sake. He realises that Elaine's love was for purer and deeper than that of the queen, for the latter is full of falsehood and deceit. And the love of the queen has now cooled down and has given place to jealous pride, she is now afraid of public opinion and anxious about her reputation, simply because her love has grown cold. And now Lancelot remembers with intense shame the treachery and hypocrisy that he has practised towards his king and friend Arthur. His life has been one of falsehood and deceit, and he wishes he were dead in the cradle. He has indeed acquired fame and glory, but what are his fame and glory worth when he does not enjoy a moments peace. His greatness merely lends countenance to sin, and thus he is responsible, in ever so little a measure, for the moral laxity among the people. In a fit of violent remorse, Lancelot resolves to put an end to her connections with Guinevere; but at the very next moment, his infatuation for the queen asserts itself, and he doubts whether he will be strong enough to break away with the queen. In his weakness he calls in the aid of the angels to save him from his sin ; but heaven never helps him who does not help himself. Lancelot's soul is torn

asunder by the sense of guilt and shames but weak as he is, he cannot tear away the bonds of sin.

The struggle in Lancelot's soul centres 'round his guilty relations with the queen. Now that he loves the queen, he cannot break off his connections with her, for his sense of honour and demands that he should remain with and share the fate of his partner in sin. But at the same time, he feels that he has sinned against his friend and King by seducing his wife. His loyalty to the king clashes with his fidelity to the queen. The tragedy of Lancelot's life is that he cannot be faithful to the queen without being false to the king, and cannot be loyal to his king without breaking his connections with the queen. He realises that he is sinning against morality and king by his continuing his relations with Guinevere, but he is so infatuated by her that he cannot think of giving her up. Tennyson shows in Lancelot the ruin of a great soul by an over-powering passion.

THE END

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